



THE ART OF

Wolfwalkers

WRITTEN BY CHARLES SOLOMON

FOREWORD BY JAMES BAXTER

AFTERWORD BY TOMM MOORE AND ROSS STEWART







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Abrams, New York

A
REWARD
FOR THE KILLING OF A
WOLF



OF Kilkenny and Surrounds

Printed for Oliver Cornwell at the Bible in Dublinne. 1650



FOREWORD 7

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Foreword



PAGE 1 Tamm Moore's sketch of Robyn and Mebh suggests their bond of friendship.

PAGES 2–3 This stylized inspirational study recalls Eyvind Earle's artwork for Disney's *Sleeping Beauty*. Artist: Emily Hughes.

PAGE 4 A poster offering a bounty for dead wolves. Artists: Lily Bernard and Ross Stewart.

PAGES Tamm Moore's early colour study suggests a cartoonish.

OPPOSITE A preliminary painting by Ross Stewart highlights the curvilinear forms and warm palette of the forest.

ABOVE James Baxter's expressive animation drawings capture the fun of Mebh and Robyn at play.

So I'm sitting in Los Angeles, in 2009, watching *The Secret of Kells* and thinking, "Who on earth are these guys?"

I'm a British animator who has spent his career in the Hollywood system, and suddenly there's this independent film from Ireland that has the intelligent tone of Hayao Miyazaki, the artistic purity of Richard Williams, and the decorative flare of Celtic design (look at the pages of the *Book of Kells* in Trinity College, Dublin, and you will see the Celts' love of intricate pattern).

Animated films are a Herculean task to complete, even for a major Hollywood studio. "Wow," I thought. "How did that happen?" As it turns out, it happened just as you might expect: through incredible hard work and commitment, the marshaling of every available artistic resource, and an unremitting siege in terms of independent fundraising. What you might not expect is that the artists who did it remain lovely, generous, and passionate people as they continue to produce the most beautiful animation from the heart of the Irish countryside. Cartoon Saloon has become a beacon for independent animation, and a lesson in balancing art and commerce.

Over the next few years, I had the pleasure of meeting Tamm Moore when he would show up in Los Angeles for pitching and fundraising. I would later meet Paul Young and Nora Twomey, Tamm's art school friends who started Cartoon Saloon with him. "I absolutely adored *Song of the Sea*," I said to Tamm, trying not to sound insanely jealous that he had created such a beautiful work of art. "We're making a new one right now," he said. "It's about wolves." "That's going to be amazing," I thought. Animating dogs is one of my favorite things to do, but I've never had the chance to do one professionally. So I said, trying to sound casual, "Well, if there's anything I can do to help, please let me know," which is my way, with filmmakers whom I really admire, of begging them to please, please, please just let me animate a couple of shots

on their movies. Thankfully, Tamm took pity on me, and I did get to contribute exactly two shots for *Wolfwalkers*.

Wolfwalkers embodies so much of what is extraordinary about Cartoon Saloon. First, it's actually set in Kilkenny, the small medieval Irish town that the studio calls home. It's not a completely insane choice to start making an animated feature there, since it has a thriving arts culture, but it's not a major metropolitan area like Dublin, or London, or Los Angeles, with their infrastructure and talent pools.

I love visiting Kilkenny. Away from the machinery of Hollywood, you instantly understand why Cartoon Saloon's films speak with such a unique voice. Over a Guinness with Tamm in a hotel bar (an experience that I highly recommend), I marveled at how he was able to build a studio there. "You didn't go out to LA or something, like the rest of us with dreams of being in animation. You made the industry come to you, here." "I guess I just didn't think it was an option," he replied. "I just wanted to get started and not worry about it being perfect. I just wanted to do it." It's that spirit of independence, of just wanting to get going on your own artistic journey, no matter what obstacles you might encounter along the way, that sets Cartoon Saloon apart. Now, Kilkenny is a thriving animation hub, with two busy animation studios and its own animation festival. Not to mention a robust gourmet vegan scene, inspired by the Cartoon Saloon crowd.

Second, *Wolfwalkers* is about integrity, being true to who you are—who you turn out to be—and celebrating the differences in all of us. Tamm and his friends at Cartoon Saloon have created a space where artistic integrity is paramount, where artists can bring to their projects what is unique about themselves, even as they all work toward a common goal. This integrity comes at a price, and that price is the necessity of fundraising. If you want to express yourself artistically as your primary goal, you're going to have to convince people to believe in you and give you your budget.

It is a never-ending struggle that you will not see in these pages. You will only see the spoils of that war, the beautiful artwork made by artists who, like wolves, are free to be themselves.

Last, *Wolfwalkers* displays the artistic style that has become a hallmark of Cartoon Saloon's films, and what this book is dedicated to celebrating. Their design sense has a special alchemy to it, and it's the thing that first drew me to their work. It is a blend of many of the things that I have loved throughout my own journey into this art form. Their design, for instance, takes some cues from Richard Williams's masterpiece *The Thief and the Cobbler* in its use of flattened perspective, which was itself inspired by the art found in Persian miniatures. In *The Secret of Kells* and *Song of the Sea*, the characters might be walking along normally, as if viewed straight on, but you might see the ground as if viewed from above, like you were looking down on a map. The perspective of the ground is tilted and flattened toward the viewer. In *Wolfwalkers*, some of this element remains, although this film plays more with perspective as it explores the wolves' experience of the world, navigating by smell through a three-dimensional space.

The character designs in *Wolfwalkers* also have a special blend of the graphic and the volumetric. This is also an element that I love, having myself been inspired by the work of Disney animator Milt Kahl, along with designers like Tom Oreb. Watching *Sleeping Beauty* to me is like watching a master magician. The character shapes are symbolic, often flattened out and "cheated" in terms of real space. They have sharp corners and many straight lines, although when they move, they move in an organic and dimensional way, which gives the characters life despite their designed appearance. How are these obviously drawn images able to have more life than some real people whom I know? Cartoon Saloon's characters have taken this design philosophy to the next level, creating shapes that flow and crash into each other like Celtic knotwork, but always staying true to character. Who these characters are is always the most important consideration, but the special magic of animation is to experience these characters in a world that, because of its artifice, can free your imagination.

As more people come to enjoy the amazing work from this group of artists, the more Cartoon Saloon can flourish and continue to produce groundbreaking animated films. I hope you enjoy experiencing the beautiful art used in the creation of *Wolfwalkers* as much as the artists enjoyed making it.

JAMES BAXTER, APRIL 2020



JAMES BAXTER was born in 1967 in Bristol and raised in Bishop's Cleeve, England. He started experimenting on little animation tests with an 8mm camera at age sixteen. James attended Cambridge College of Arts & Technology for one year and West Surrey College of Art and Design for another year before leaving to work on *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* in London. James moved to California to work for the Walt Disney Company, where he worked as the supervising animator on classic characters like Belle in *Beauty and the Beast* and Rafiki in *The Lion King*. He then moved to DreamWorks SKG, where he worked on *The Prince of Egypt*, *Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron*, and *Shrek 2*. From 2003 to 2008, James had his own studio, James Baxter Animation, which produced several projects including the hand-drawn animation for the Disney feature film *Enchanted* and the opening sequence of DreamWorks' *Kung Fu Panda*. He returned to DreamWorks Animation to work on *How to Train Your Dragon*, its sequel, and *The Croods*. James is now the director of character animation at Netflix.

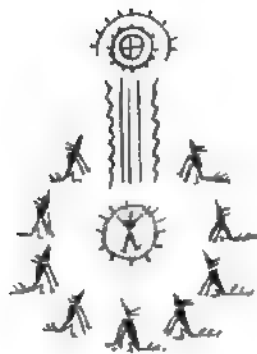
ABOVE Overcalling the wolf suggests its power vs. it as Robin Artib, Tomm Moore

OPPOSITE *Robin and Mebh* confront the wolf pack. Artist: Cyril Pedrosa





I. Inspiration: Shape-shifters in Ireland



OPPOSITE: An early manuscript illustration depicting St. George and the Dragon. Concept by Alice Dieudonné

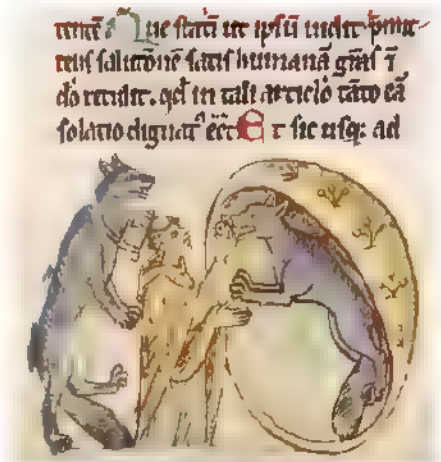
ABOVE: Sketch by Alice Dieudonné echoes the iconography of werewolves

RIGHT: A medieval illumination of the twelfth-century *Topographia Hibernica* (Topography of Ireland). Gerald of Wales recounts the tale of a wandering monk who was asked by a wolf to give last rites to his dying mate—who was actually an aged woman. The wolf tells the priest that he and his wife are natives of Ossory who are cursed to live as animals every seven years. In other stories, certain inhabitants of Ossory leave their bodies in a seemingly lifeless state while they travel in animal form.

Shape-shifters are popular figures in myths and folktales around the world. In Japan and China, foxes assume human form to bedevil the unwary. In Brazil, the river-dolphin Boto can turn into a boy; many Native American cultures have stories of "skin-walkers." Shape-shifters are not the werewolves of horror stories: cursed creatures who turn into ravaging beasts when the moon is full. Shape-shifters alter their forms at will. The Selkies in *Song of the Sea* control when they transform; Sirius Black and Minerva McGonagals in the *Harry Potter* books can assume animal forms when they choose.

The most famous shape-shifters in Irish myths are the man-wolves of Ossory. In the twelfth-century *Topographia Hibernica* (Topography of Ireland), Gerald of Wales recounts the tale of a wandering monk who was asked by a wolf to give last rites to his dying mate—who was actually an aged woman. The wolf tells the priest that he and his wife are natives of Ossory who are cursed to live as animals every seven years. In other stories, certain inhabitants of Ossory leave their bodies in a seemingly lifeless state while they travel in animal form.

According to some accounts, these shape-shifters were the descendants of Laignech Fáciad, the ancestor of the kings of Ossory whose medieval realm included most of County Kilkenny and County Laois. In others, when the ancient gods or *Tuatha De Danann* left Ireland, some of them remained and married mortals, whose children kept the supernatural powers of transformation. Scholars speculate that some tales may be based on accounts of warriors who donned wolf-skins when they "went wolfing" (raiding).



Tommy Moore first heard about the Wolves of Ossory as a boy in the Young Irish Film Markets program: "I remember a lady named Angela Walsh talking about them and thinking even then it could be a good idea for a film or a comic book."

But the idea would be dormant for many years.

HISTORICAL INSPIRATION



BUY A CANE FOR NAUGHTY BOYS



OLIVER CROMWELL



P. 2



Fig. 3 Paper-Mill of the Sixteenth Century



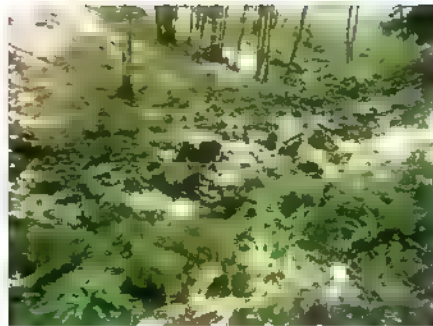
"For four vile beasts Ireland has no fence:
Their bodies lice, their houses rats possess
Most wicked priests govern their conscience.
And ravening wolves do waste their fields no less."



STUDIO FIELD TRIPS



1



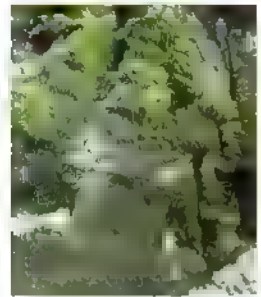
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3



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5

OPPOSITE A sun-dappled path leading through a dense forest of tall, thin trees. The path is covered in fallen leaves and small flowers. The trees are tall and thin, with their branches reaching up towards the sky. The sun filters through the leaves, creating a dappled light effect on the path.

1 A sun-dappled path leading through a dense forest of tall, thin trees. The path is covered in fallen leaves and small flowers. The trees are tall and thin, with their branches reaching up towards the sky. The sun filters through the leaves, creating a dappled light effect on the path.

2 A dense, sun-dappled forest floor with many small, light-colored flowers or mushrooms. The forest floor is covered in fallen leaves and small flowers. The sun filters through the leaves, creating a dappled light effect on the forest floor.

3 A person sitting on a log in a sun-dappled forest, looking at a book or tablet. The person is sitting on a log, looking at a book or tablet. The forest is sun-dappled, with many small, light-colored flowers or mushrooms on the forest floor.

4 A group of people standing in a line in a sun-dappled forest, holding up their phones to take pictures. The group of people is standing in a line, holding up their phones to take pictures. The forest is sun-dappled, with many small, light-colored flowers or mushrooms on the forest floor.



6

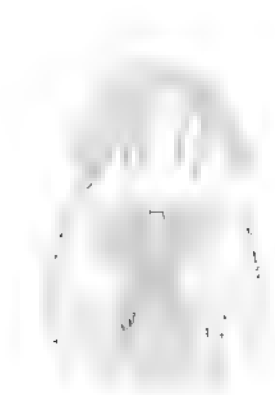


7

5 The forest floor is covered in fallen leaves and small flowers. The sun filters through the leaves, creating a dappled light effect on the forest floor.



II. Story



It's better to live free
than die in chains
wild
freedom VS tame
nature VS society
balance between the two

OPPOSITE The storyboard emphasizes the clash between the wildness of the wolves and the repression of the sheep.

ABOVE This stylized line drawing illustrates the conflict between the freedom of the natural world and the repression of the human world imposed by the sheep.

Tomm kept the Wolves of Ossory in his memory while he worked on other projects, including the first Irish animated features *The Secret of Kells* (2009) and *Song of the Sea* (2014). When he began to think about a third film, he knew he wanted to work with Ross Stewart, his co-director on sequences for the American anthology feature *The Prophet* (2014). They created an original story using a process they'd learned from American writer and story artist Jim Capobianco, whose credits include *Ratatouille* and *Inside Out*.

Wolfwalkers producer and Cartoon Saloon CEO Paul Young recalls, "Tomm heard Jim say that when he's trying to come up with ideas, he writes two lists: things he loves and things he hates. Obviously all good stories have conflict, so he would make the lists to find the conflicts he needed. That's what Tomm and Ross did. An original idea brings a sense of ownership. You've no complications from people outside."

"We wanted to get in animal rights, wildness, freedom and oppression, folktales about the things we love and are interested in," says Stewart.

"The main theme of the story is trying to find the balance that we need between nature and wildness, order and stability, rules and structure," states Moore. "We play that through all the characters in the contrast between Mebh and Robyn on Bill's internal battle over what is best for Robyn."

"I don't know when the Wolves of Ossory came back onto my radar, maybe while I was researching *Song of the Sea*," he adds. "On the Irish language broadcaster (TG4), there was a series called *Wolfland*, about how Oliver Cromwell had tried to wipe out the wolves in Ireland to help tame the country. He wanted to show how he had control in a way the king he'd replaced didn't. We added the Wolves of Ossory, and the story started to take shape pretty quickly."

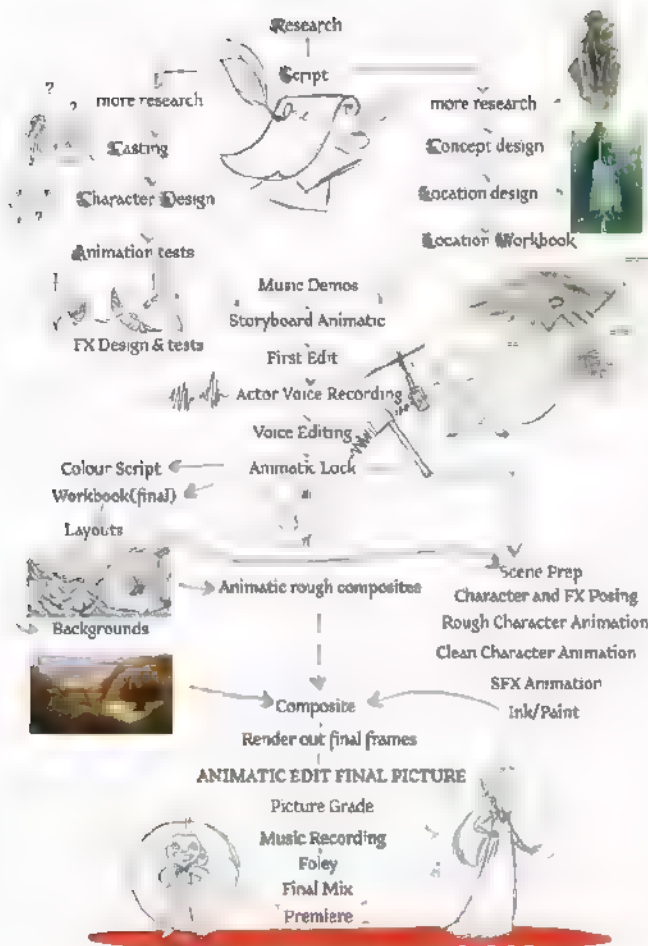
Moore and Stewart share an easy and immediately apparent rapport. They may not finish each other's sentences, but they develop a single thought while talking back and forth.

"Ross and I wanted to set the story in Kilkenny, and around that time Kilkenny was basically the capital of Ireland," Moore confesses. "The more we researched the period, the more we understood the Puritan ethos that Cromwell embodied. We realized it was a huge part of what we wanted to talk about in terms of wildness versus order. When we thought about the Wolves of Ossory, we got the idea of two sides: one from England, one from Ireland, and how their worldviews collide."

Although the villain in the story is based on Oliver Cromwell, the artists took liberties with the historical figure and refer to him only as the Lord Protector.

"Cromwell was a natural bad guy in the mid-seventeenth century in Ireland," Stewart says. "We researched older Irish attitudes toward wolves. The Irish people had to live alongside wolves. There were stories about how wolves would protect people who treated them with kindness and respect. Then Cromwell comes and says, 'We're going to exterminate these animals.' The Irish would say, 'There's a place for them, there's a place for us. We discovered we had a richness to draw from.'"

To help write the story, Moore and Stewart called in screenwriter W.L. Collins, who had worked on *Song of the Sea*. Collins was beginning a new career as a screenwriter when he heard about *The Secret of Kells*. He recalls, "As soon as I saw the trailer on YouTube, I said, 'Those are the people I want to play with!' There was a very organic and natural overlap of our sensibilities, our cultural references, the types of stories we wanted to tell. My first feature was a kids' road movie set during Halloween weekend in 1987. Tomm was talking about a movie he wanted to do set over the same weekend."



"There's a lovely old Irish Gaelic word for wolf, Mac Tíre, which means "son of the land." I think when people were speaking Irish, they thought differently about things because the names had different meanings."

TOMM MOORE CO-DIRECTOR

you can't do. The animatic is where most of the editing is done in animation. You're trying to make the story feel like one voice so viewers won't know it was done by five different board artists."

"If you have five or six storyboard artists working, you will get five or six different, very accomplished bodies of work that, you need to make feel like a coherent movie," adds editor Richard Cody. "You have to make sure the characters are consistent and have an arc. Some artists focus more on visuals, some on character development. You may have a sequence that's great by itself but needs work to make it fit properly into the film."

"You can spend days working on a sequence, then find in the context of the greater animatic it's not needed," Cody says. "It may be an old idea that isn't worth keeping anymore, or the emotional beats in that sequence are better placed elsewhere in the movie. You question every single idea, making sure that it's needed and in the right place. You have to make sure it's supported by the setup and the payoff and the ideas around it. First doing all of those things, maybe it's worth keeping. Maybe."

"I had been an editor for a preschool show, a show where it's exactly seven minutes on the screen," says Mulery. "I would come in and say 'Guys, you have to bring this to layout tomorrow, you cut these three shots, you merge these two and we're out.' Maybe if I were directing that's not the approach I would take. But I felt I could be a knowledgeable someone who understands editing and could be dispassionate."

Three editors worked on *Wolfwalkers*, polishing and focusing the animatic, to match the directors' vision. The first act of the film proved especially challenging and had to be reworked multiple times. Stewart comments, "Darragh should probably get a story credit because he did an amazing amount of boarding himself, picking images here and there, reediting the first act in editing."



"The first pitch was a proper story. It was an action-adventure tale where a father winds up hunting his daughter – and becomes the thing he's hunting. They wanted to tell a story where you put people inside the head of a hunted animal. As they did research, they rediscovered the Wolves of Ossory: a mythical starting point."

TALL YOUNG PRODUCER

"This is the first action movie Cartoon Saloon has made, and the first where we had a villain," Byrne replies. "We had a tricky time getting act one right; it was about making it dark, but not too dark, and fun, but not silly."

"*Song of the Sea* was a very personal story to me, and the storyboard artists were fleshing out exactly what I had in mind," adds Moore. "For *Wolfwalkers*, Ross and I agreed to give more ownership to the storyboard artists, so people like Giovanna Ferrari and Louise Bagnall could bring something of their own to boards. Storyboarding took a long time. There was a lot of debate and discussion. We asked production for another eight months to rewrite huge sections at the start. I'd never done that before."

As is often the case, the filmmakers had to discover what they *didn't* want the film to be before they could figure out what they

did want it to be. "The story was very dark and a bit more adult and grim before we realized that story wasn't the one we wanted to tell," says Stewart. "At one point, there was a long section with Bill and Robyn living in the forest before they got to Kilkenny. We realized, 'The story really starts when they get to Kilkenny, so we cut the lonely forest backstory and join them when they're already engaged in city life.'"

Looking back over the story process, Moore says, "There's a real anxiety to our endings. The wolves are displaced. They're refugees. They have to go. Anyone who knows history will know the wolves became extinct a hundred years later, so there is a melancholy aspect. But at the time being, they survive as a family."

ABOVE: A wolf watches a group of people from a distance in a forest. Artist: Ross McQuinn

1: A wolf watches a group of people from a distance in a forest. Artist: Ross McQuinn

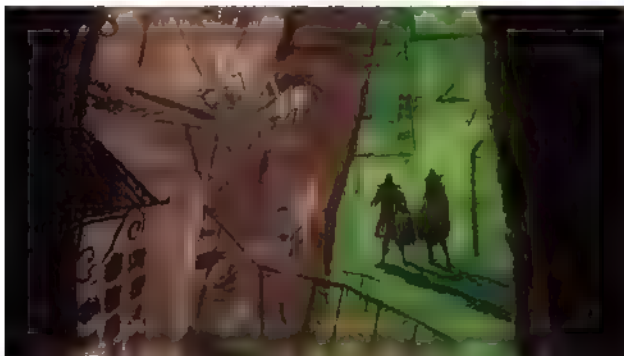
2: A wolf watches a group of people from a distance in a forest. Artist: Ross McQuinn

3: Stylized version of the forest. Artist: Friedrich Schager

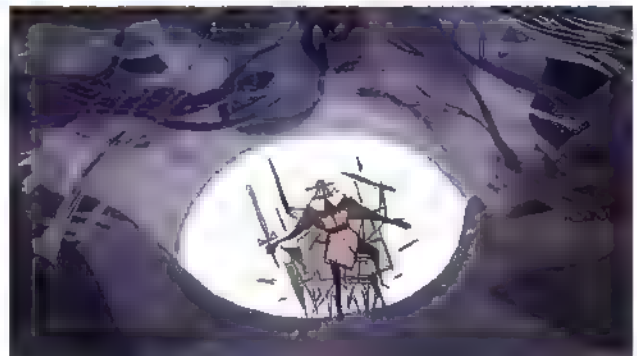
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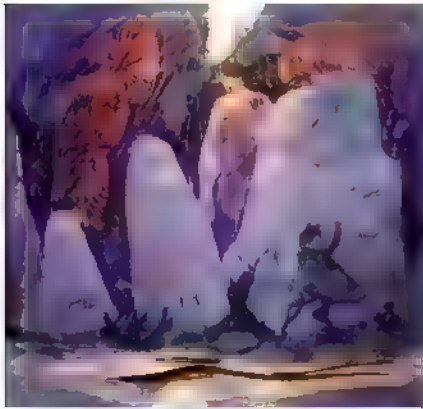
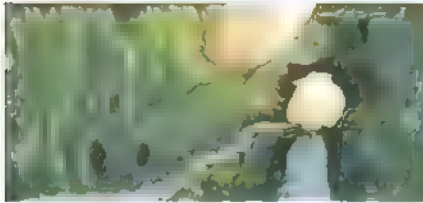
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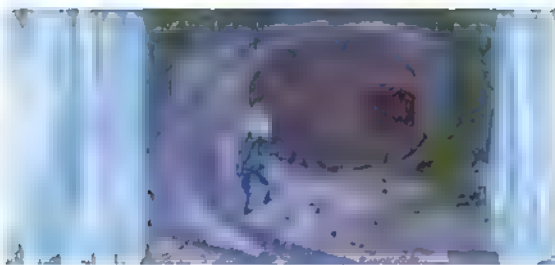


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1. $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{n} \sum_{k=1}^n f\left(\frac{k}{n}\right) = \int_0^1 f(x) dx$

2. $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{1}{x} = \infty$ (or $-\infty$)

[illegible]

4. x 的 11 次方根 $\sqrt[11]{x}$ 在 $x=1$ 处的 11 阶导数 $y^{(11)}$ 为 $\frac{1}{11!}$ 。

5. $F_{\text{net}} = \frac{dW}{dt} = \frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{1}{2} M v^2 \right) = M v \frac{dv}{dt}$
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6. For the purpose of this study, after the initial review, we used Focus groups.

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DIRECTORS' NOTES

[illegible]

$\frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{1-v^2/c^2}} \right) = \frac{v}{c^2} \frac{dv}{dt}$

[illegible][illegible]

Treue der Erde und des Königs
 In der Hand der Götter
 Die die Welt erschaffen hat
 Und die uns alle leitet

Figure 1

(a) **Flowchart illustrating the selection process for the study.**

(b) **Flowchart illustrating the selection process for the study.**

(c) **Flowchart illustrating the selection process for the study.**

(d) **Flowchart illustrating the selection process for the study.**

(e) **Flowchart illustrating the selection process for the study.**

(f) **Flowchart illustrating the selection process for the study.**

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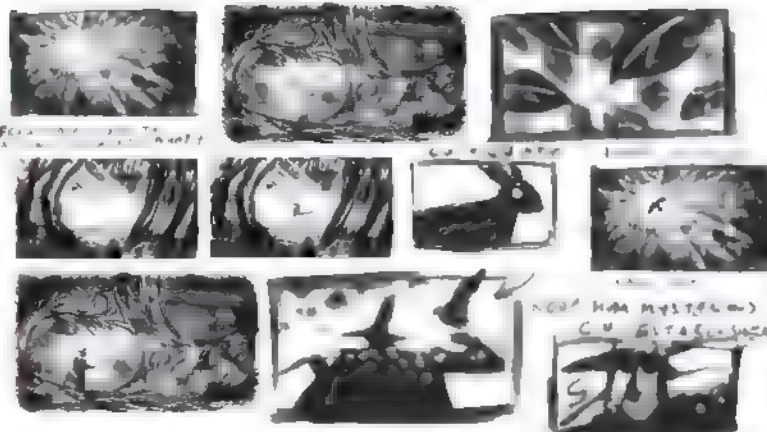
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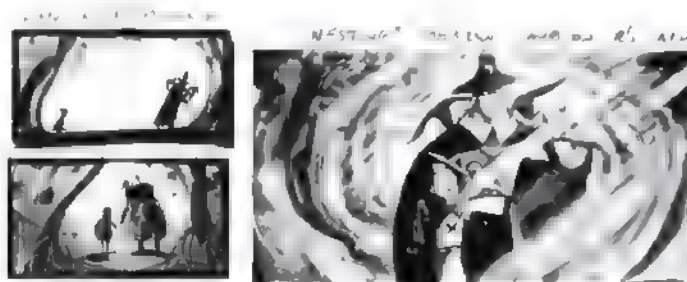
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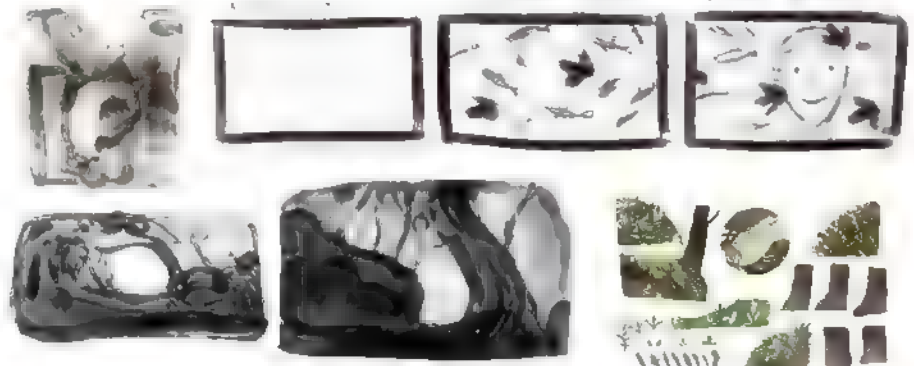
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 University of California,
 San Diego.

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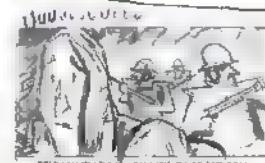
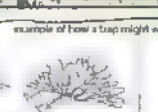
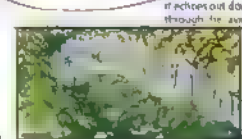
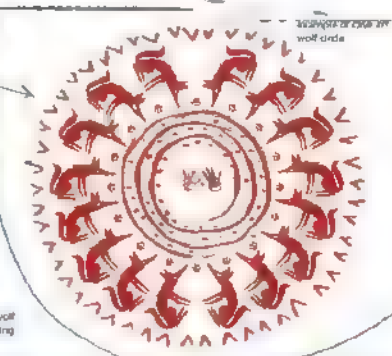
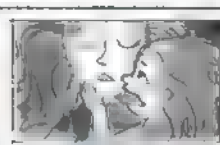
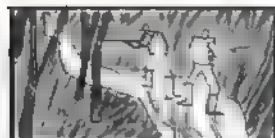
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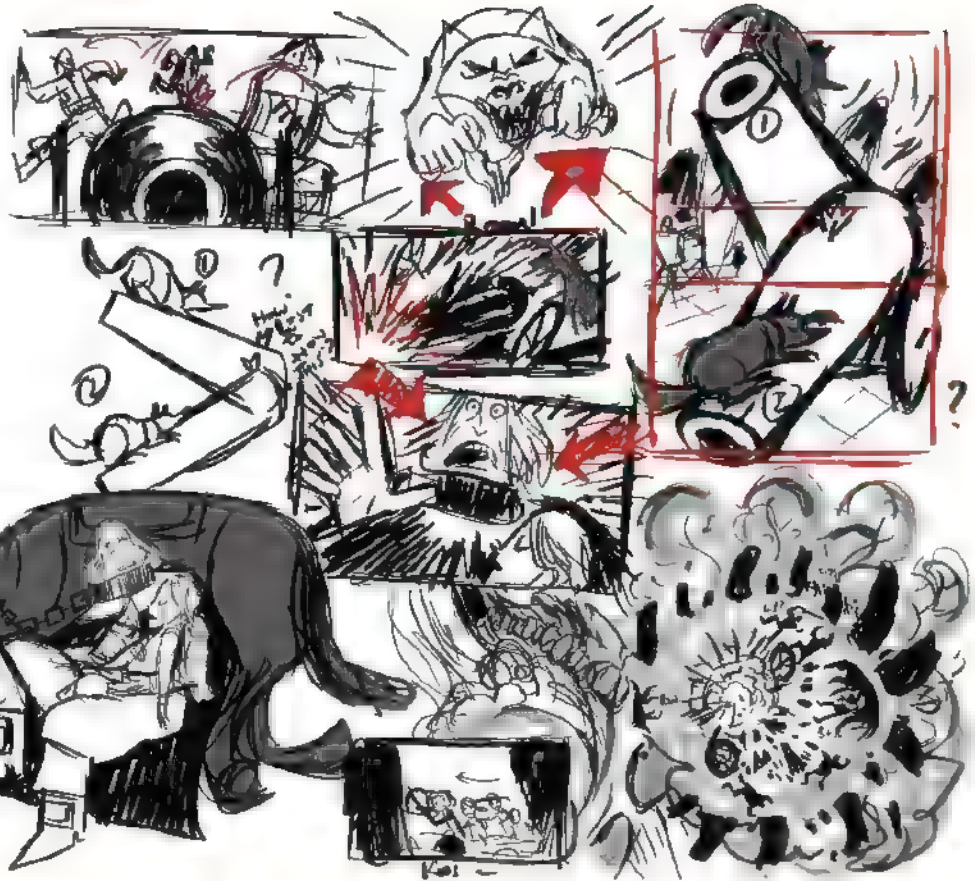




Story 2 23

$\frac{1}{2} \times 2 = 1$





1. The first scene is a wide shot of a landscape with a large, dark, rocky mountain in the background. In the foreground, there is a small, simple wooden structure, possibly a hut or a shed, with a thatched roof. The scene is set in a valley with some trees and a small stream.

2. A close-up shot of a person's face, looking down with a sad or thoughtful expression. The person has dark hair and is wearing a simple, light-colored garment.

3. A medium shot of a person sitting on a bench or a low wall, looking out over a landscape. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt and dark pants.

4. A close-up shot of a person's face, looking up with a surprised or excited expression. The person has dark hair and is wearing a simple, light-colored garment.

5. A medium shot of a person standing in a field, looking out over a landscape. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt and dark pants.

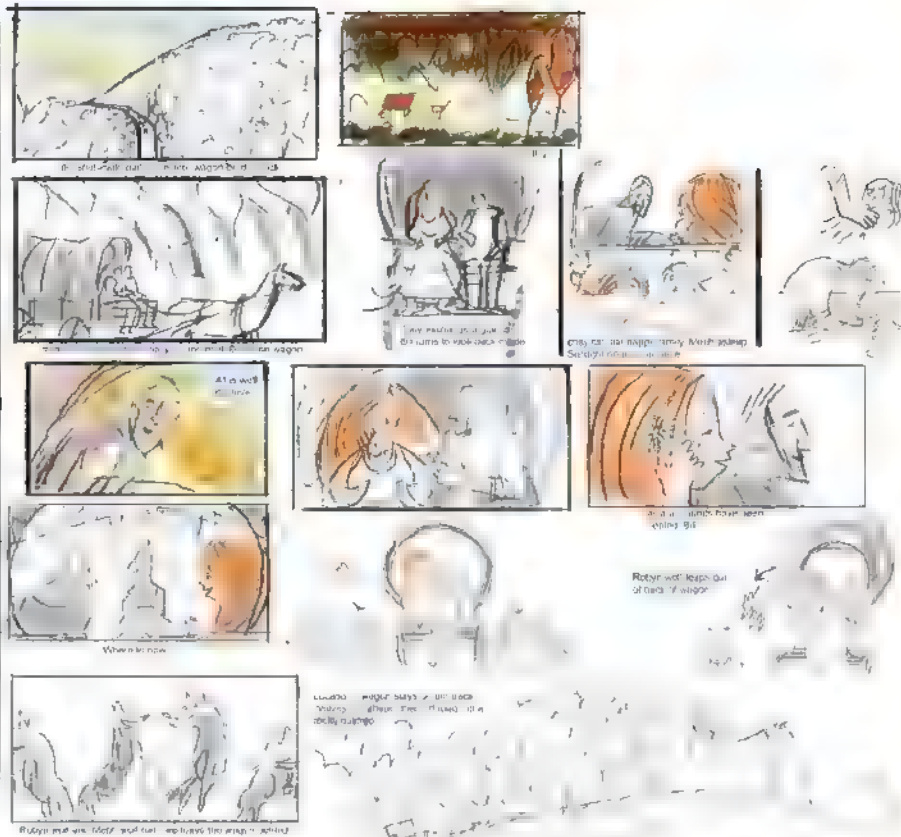
6. A close-up shot of a person's face, looking down with a sad or thoughtful expression. The person has dark hair and is wearing a simple, light-colored garment.

7. A medium shot of a person sitting on a bench or a low wall, looking out over a landscape. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt and dark pants.

8. A close-up shot of a person's face, looking up with a surprised or excited expression. The person has dark hair and is wearing a simple, light-colored garment.

9. A medium shot of a person standing in a field, looking out over a landscape. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt and dark pants.

10. A close-up shot of a person's face, looking down with a sad or thoughtful expression. The person has dark hair and is wearing a simple, light-colored garment.



west →

EARLY IDEAS

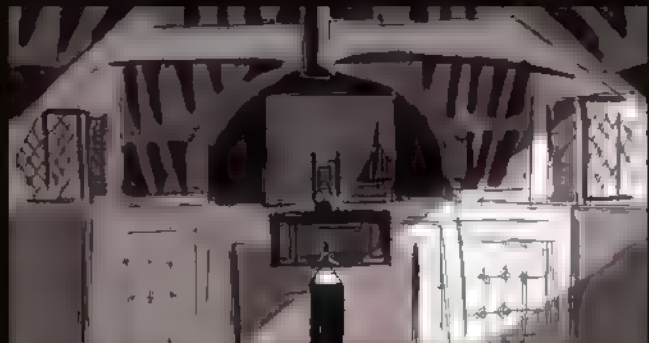


OPPOSITE *A*: *to go in the opposite direction*

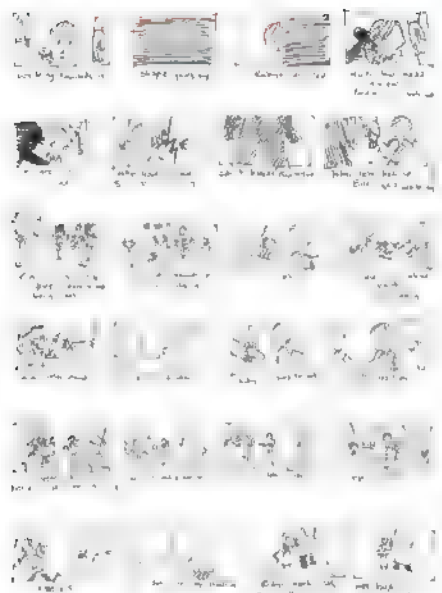
THIS PAGE *A*: *to go in the same direction*

FOLLOWING SPREAD *A*: *to go in the same direction*





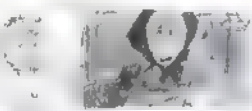
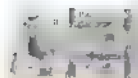
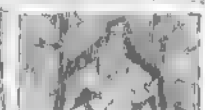
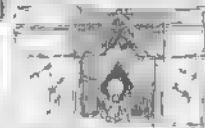
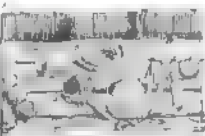
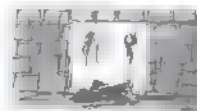
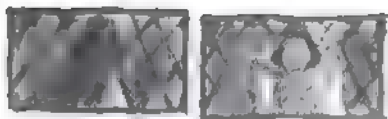
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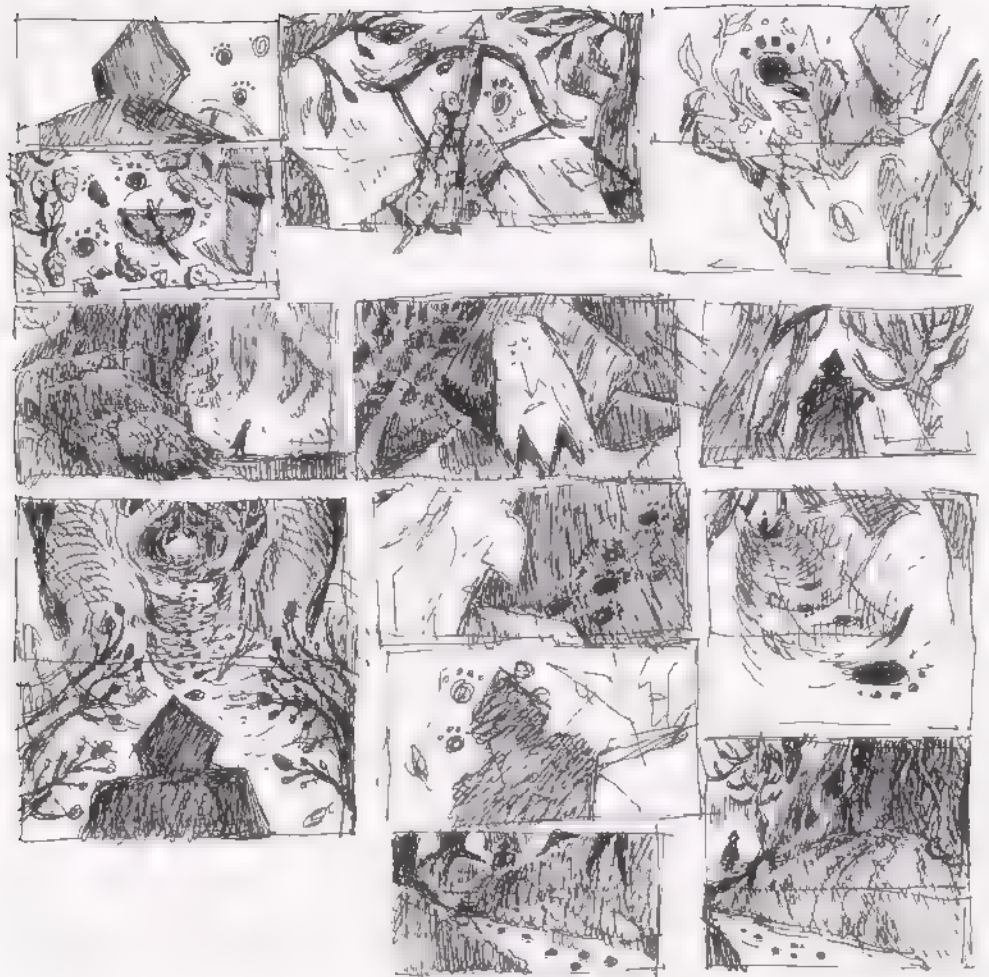
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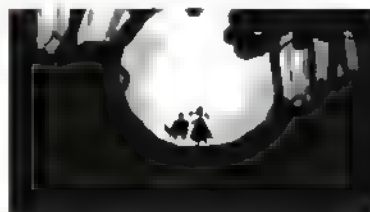
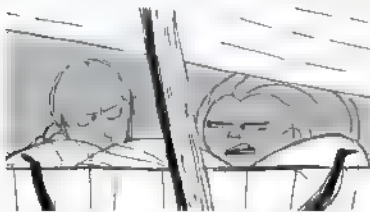
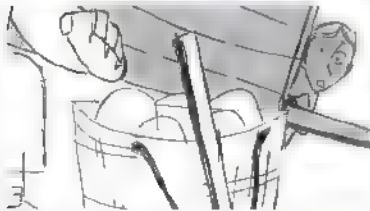
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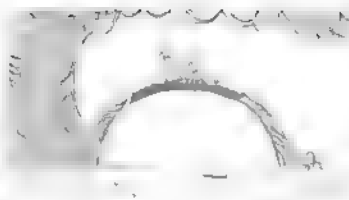




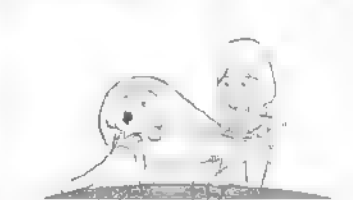
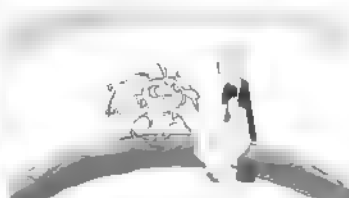
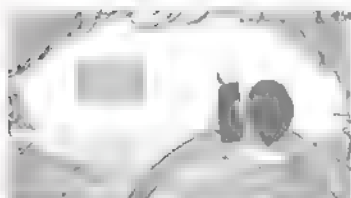




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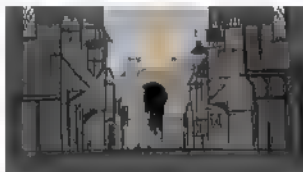
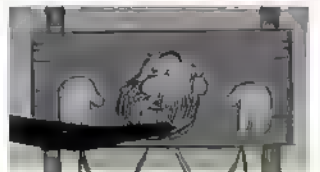
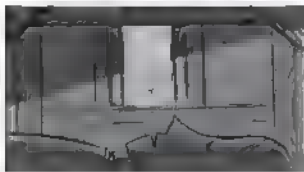
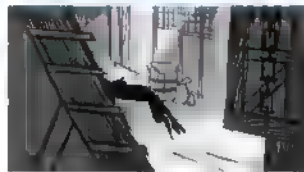
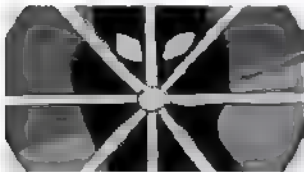
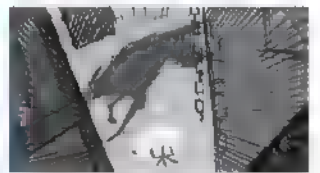
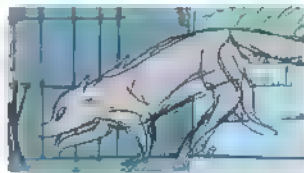


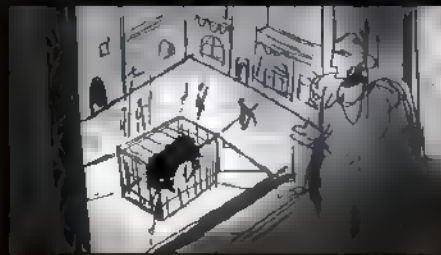
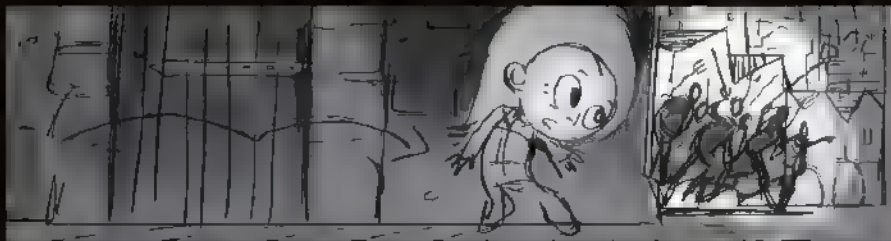
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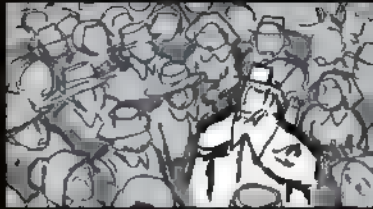
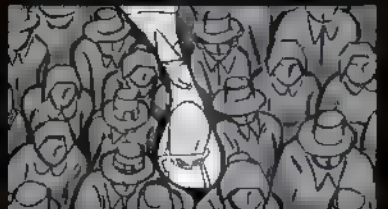
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 - HOLLANDSPRAN, MIT: Artist: Carl Gustav.

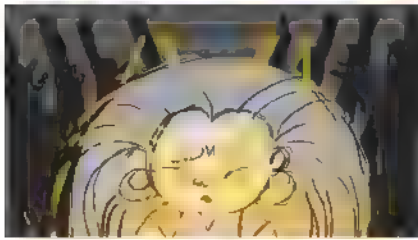
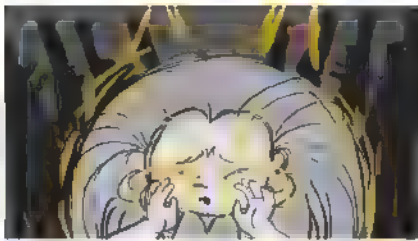






LEFT *Ally - R. Salton*
 and the Moppar

OPPOSITE *Ally - R. Salton*





III. Characters

"One of the really interesting aspects of the story was having the freedom to act on your instincts. Being able to live unconstrained by society's rules. As teenagers, both of us would've liked to do different things in reaction against society. We really wanted Robyn to define her true self and not be controlled by society or what the Lord Protector or Bill was telling her to do."

TOMM MOORE CO-DIRECTOR

OPPOSITE: Robyn and Mebh in *Wolfwalkers*
Mebh and her male characters by Tomm Moore
Background by Ross Stewart

The Cartoon Saloon artists worked to create a story that offered conflict, strong emotions, humor, pathos, and a resolution. But the audience had to care about the characters for the film to succeed. The most fantastic battles and elaborate chases mean nothing if the audience isn't invested in the main characters' fate. From Pinocchio leaving Geppetto's workshop to Brendan sneaking out of the Abbey of Kells to Chihiro going to work in Yubaba's bathhouse, memorable animated characters have undergone trials and adventures that won them a place in viewers' hearts.

Much of the story process for *Wolfwalkers* involved developing the personalities of Robyn and Mebh. Their relationship and how they related to the other characters was the key to the success of the film. In the first drafts of the story and early preliminary drawings, Robyn was a boy, whose friendship with Mebh echoed Brendan's bond with Aisling in *The Secret of Kells*.

"Bill and Robyn were originally a father-and-son team: a hunter and his apprentice," Moore recalls. "We realized that what Robyn would be up against in that society as a girl offered more drama and conflict because she wasn't just going against her father's wishes; she was going against society's expectations. The idea of a girl trying to be a hunter was defying Puritan society—which made a much stronger, much more interesting story."

"I based Robyn on my wife as a little girl—a little bit visually, but more on her being strong-willed and determined and loving animals and nature," he continues. "That helped me get my head around who she might be as a character. It was easier for me as a director to deal with Brendan in *The Secret of Kells* and Ben in *Song of the Sea* because they were based on me and my son."

"When I'm writing any story, I try to make it as personal as possible," adds Collins. "One of my best friends growing up was my neighbor Shirley, who was a tomboy. We came from very different families, but that friendship was a happy oasis when we were going

through personal problems. I used it as my touchstone when trying to fashion Robyn and Mebh's relationship. Mebh is more tomboyish and wild, Robyn's more bookish and nervous. Because they're kids, they approach their differences not with fear and animosity but with playfulness and curiosity. It's the adults who are fearful and defensive."

The artists wanted to be sure their lead characters honestly depicted girls' experiences. Stewart notes: "A story with female leads directed by two guys could be a little maudlin. We wouldn't be able to draw wholly from our life experiences. But we had really good female storyboarders who brought a lot to the personalities of Robyn and Mebh. I think they were drawing from their childhoods and brought a truth to the girls that would be hard for us to do."

The Puritan society the Lord Protector represents maintained strict gender roles, which its members believed were based on biblical dictates. It was a society with rigid rules. Disobedience could mean banishment, imprisonment, or even death.

"It was a time when girls had no voice and no say," Stewart comments. "Robyn comes to Ireland wanting to have a life with her father out in the woods, hunting and playing. Suddenly she's ordered to work in the scullery. It makes sense in the story for her to have these chains put around her because of her gender."

In contrast, Mebh and Moll are powerful females and the last wolfwalkers," he continues. "In Irish mythology and to lore, they had a great reverence for the mother goddess—in complete opposition to Puritanism, which was a more male-focused religion. Moll and Mebh represent the Irish traditions and religion that are being stamped out."

The lessons Robyn is expected to learn are articulated by the Head Housekeeper, a soft-spoken woman who oversees the domestic servants in the Lord Protector's headquarters.

The Head Housekeeper is voiced by producer Nora Twomey, who says, "It's interesting that she doesn't have a name; I like to call

her Bridgette. She's middle-aged, downtrodden, and invisible. She tries to teach Robyn you survive the world she's in by keeping your head down, by doing your work, by trying to get through the day. It sounds like good advice, but it's how to die slowly. It's how to stifle yourself to death—or be stifled—see a lot of the history of women in Ireland in her silence."

Robyn, who had enjoyed greater freedom in England, rebels against this enforced drudgery. When Bill admonishes her with the Puritan adage "Work is prayer," she replies, "Then I've prayed the whole Bible."

Honor Kneafsey, who provides Robyn's voice, says, "Robyn thinks she's braver than she actually is. She's scared of a lot of things, yet she'll put on a front to show everyone she can do something. Because her father's a hunter, she thinks she can be one, too. Maybe she can, maybe she can't. Throughout the film, she becomes more independent and finds things she's really good at. Mebh teaches her more and more things she enjoys. Mebh brings out the best in Robyn, and she likes that."

Although Robyn likes to think of herself as independent, she grew up in a far more circumscribed world than Mebh, whose home is the forest. Stewart explains, "Mebh is an innocent girl, but she's also the leader of a wolf pack. She represents wildness and spirit, but she's also the vulnerable aspect of nature that can be damaged. Robyn represents the invader, but she's also an innocent trapped in Cromwell's master plan. The girls become best friends because they enjoy each other's company. But they're caught up in this bigger scheme of the destruction of the environment."

"Mebh is very impulsive, still very young, a not terribly responsible kid who's suddenly been given this huge responsibility by her parent," adds Moore. "Robyn is very competent and responsible and wants to prove herself, but her father doesn't give her the responsibility that she craves."

"At the beginning, Robyn and Mebh don't like each other because they see their differences clearly," Kneafsey says. "As the story goes on, the differences become smaller, and they bounce off each other. It's a sister bond between them."

"Getting Robyn and Mebh right was very important: If that friendship didn't work, the rest of the movie wasn't going to work," Byrne comments. "Robyn is more like a Miyazaki female character. She's her own person, and she's escaping. But Mebh is going to be everyone's favorite character."

Bill is caught in a web of conflicting duties and obligations. He wants his daughter to be happy, but he also wants her to be safe. He

believes in the rules of the Puritan society he lives in, but he chafes at its restrictions—especially at the limits it imposes on Robyn.

Bill is a father trying to do his best, trying to look after his daughter, trying to steer her through a menacing world," says Stewart. "But he's also the Lord Protector's soldier. He has duties to fulfill, and he's trying to avoid punishment for himself and for his daughter. He's a soldier and a father—and a pawn in Cromwell's master plan. You can't really blame him for that."

"We're working through the disconnect when parents become so protective they don't realize they're crushing their child's will," adds Moore. "Bill is really trying to control Robyn. He's a bit like the Abbot in *Kells*. But he's also a soldier and a cog in the machine. He's closed himself off to how he'd like things to be. As a Puritan, he's been told that civilized people live under these orders. It's only by leaving that society that he finds a freer way to live."

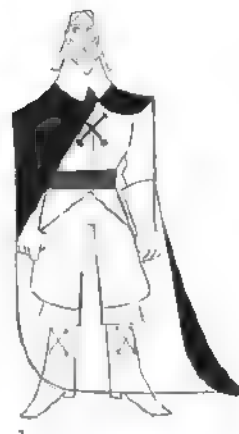
Early drafts of the story explored how many men like Bill came from the lower classes in England and Scotland. The military campaign in Ireland offered a chance to advance socially and financially. But explaining his motivations shifted the focus of the story from Robyn to Bill. So the filmmakers simplified Bill's backstory: He's always been a soldier.

"Bill became too interesting," Stewart explains. "Because we're middle-aged men, we were relating to the middle-aged male character too much and losing sight of Robyn. Bill had to fade into a more archetypal role."

As they developed Bill's character, Collins, Moore, and Stewart all had a single actor in mind to provide his voice: Sean Bean, best known to audiences as the noble but conflicted Boromir in Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* movies and the honorable to a fault Ned Stark in the TV series *Game of Thrones*. Collins says, "When I was writing, I had Sean Bean's voice in my head very clearly."

The vocal performances provide an important tool for animators. They time the mouth movement to match the vocal track so that the characters look like they're speaking the lines. The way an actor delivers a line will also suggest how the characters act. Animators agree that a good vocal track is essential to creating a convincing performance on screen.

"At the beginning, Bill's very much in control of his child and follows the orders of the Lord Protector," Bean says. "The Puritan way of thinking is quite restrictive. Everything of comfort or joy was frowned upon. Bill tries to be strict with Robyn, but eventually discovers she's quite special. He could never believe in anything as supernatural and bizarre as what he sees with his own eyes, but he



"Obviously, we have dialogue and a story to tell, but we also had to do lots of howling, growling, yelping, whining, and whimpering. I did some mad things with my voice that I've never had the opportunity to do before. There'll be no stopping me now."

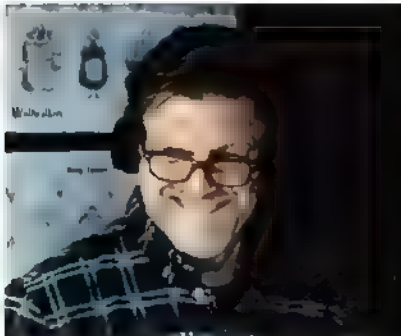
MARIA DOYLE KENNEDY
VOICE OF MOLLY

1 A simple, clear, bluish-white person in Bill
Artist: Louise Bagnall

2-4 Three members of the voice cast at the recording sessions (left to right: Sean Bean/Bill; Maria Doyle Kennedy/Moll; Simon McBurney/Lord Protector)

5-6 Drawings of Molly and the Lord Protector

7-8 Robyn and Mebh



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realizes everything she said was true. For a man in Cromwell's army, it's a massive leap of faith and imagination.

If the Lord Protector is a patriarchal figure, Moll represents the ancient, powerful maternal spirit Stewart describes. As the leader of the pack, she leaves her human body to grow the forest, ensuring nothing threatens the wolves. When she is imprisoned, Mebb must assume her role as leader while searching desperately for her mother. Moll also has to be convincing as both a human and a wolf.

Moll's voice is provided by Irish actress/musician Maria Doyle Kennedy who played Vera Bates in *Downton Abbey*. "I sort of search for her mother that drives Mebb throughout the story," she says. "She is separated from her mother, and through the separation she assumes a new mantle. It is a separation that circumstances necessitate for a short while. It becomes longer and more fraught. Moll passes the baton to Mebb: 'I don't wish for us to part, but we must address the situation we're in. I think women often do that.'"

"There's all of the questions around being maternal, but recognizing the growing up of your own child, surrendering to it, allowing it to happen, letting go," she adds. "Moll shows Mebb some responsibility; the townspeople hold their children in a fearful way, not allowing them any sort of independence or freedom. It's very difficult for them to grow up."

Simon McBurney played characters as diverse as Oliver Lacon in *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* and the voice of the embittered house-elf Kresch in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part 1* before tackling the Lord Protector, the fictionalized version of Oliver Cromwell in *Wolfwalkers*. "Playing Oliver Cromwell is always complex and difficult, not only because of what he did in Ireland," he says. "He's

a very interesting character, with a monstrous, obsessive side. He truly felt it his religious duty to do what he did and found justifications for it in the Bible."

In *Wolfwalkers*, he's the authority figure who is trying to civilize the country. The Wolves represent the wild part of nature, which he believes he has a God-given right to overcome," McBurney explains. "The Lord Protector isn't a bad guy; he has his moments of doubt. He gets his comeuppance. But he's a very important character who provides drama and tension. He believes that civilization is close to Godliness, and whatever is wild is chaotic and therefore devilish. The older, deeper beliefs are assimilated as witchcraft or devilry."

Casting children's voices for animated roles can be challenging. The actors have to sound spontaneous and natural while delivering their lines. If they sound too polished, the delivery will take the audience out of the moment. When he was casting the voice of Russell in *Up*, Pixar director Pete Docter complained that there seemed to be a school where young actors were taught to over-project and over-articulate. For the animated "Peanuts" special, director Bill Melendez and producer Lee Mendelson chose elementary school children with little or no formal training.

"With young actors, you always look for unknowns. You rarely get an established person or a preconceived notion of a voice," says Collins. "In my head, I knew Robyn was English and would have a Northern English accent. The guys cast both girls absolutely perfectly."

"We had a good casting director, Louise Juely, who got us loads of audition tapes," replies Moore. "But once Honor appeared, we were sure she was right for us. She's a more experienced, professional actor."



For Mebh, we wanted an Irish girl who had a real country Irish accent," says Stewart. "Unfortunately, a lot of the auditions were from theatrical actors who either sounded posh or had lost any country accent—not the Mebh we needed. Eva Whittaker popped up and she was so full of attitude, so confident and cheeky with a sense of humor. I fell in love with her voice and her performance immediately."

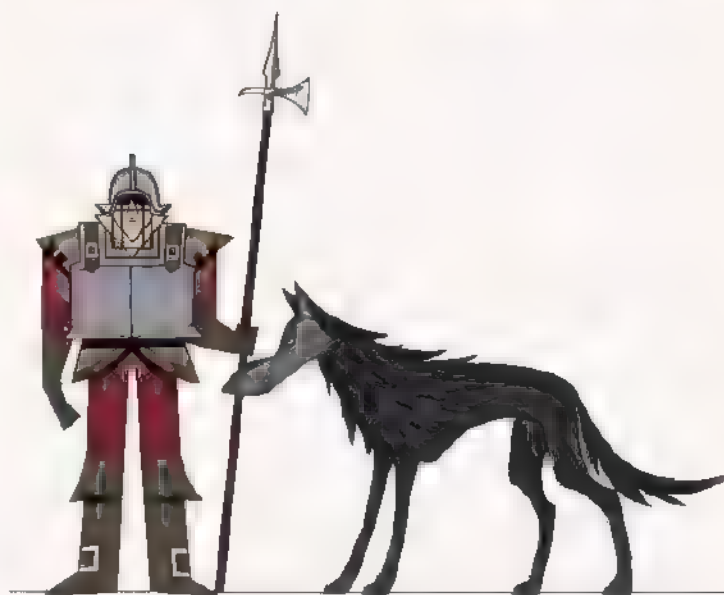
"For the final recordings, when she came in, she could go into floods of tears, and the whole room would be silent," Stewart recalls. "At the end of the performance, someone would say, 'Eva, are you okay?' And she'd answer with a beaming smile, 'Yes, I'm fine!'"

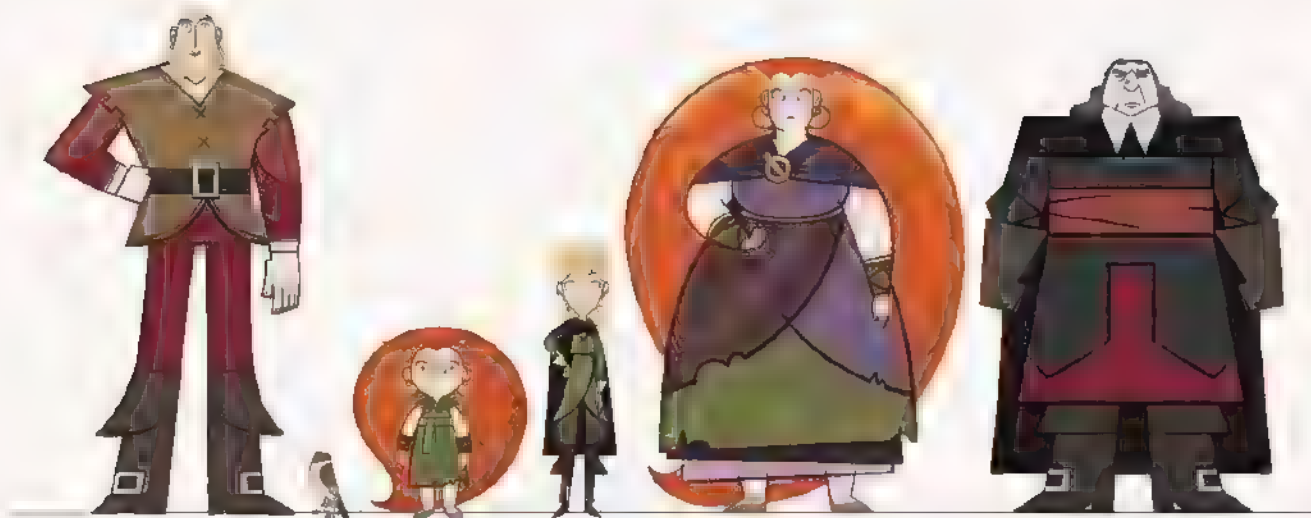
Reflecting on her performance, Whittaker says, "I had to work a lot on the anger, the pain, and the sadness behind it all. There was a lot of growling and shouting in it. They needed to have me sound like a wolf for a few lines, especially when she gets really angry. Sometimes, when she's talking, she's growling at the same time. She shows how hard it is to lose a parent. Her mother was all she had before she met Robyn."

Eva broke my heart when she read that one word: 'Mammy.' When she said it, she brought me back to my own childhood," concludes Collins. "We would've pronounced 'mammy' that way. She made chills go down the back of my neck. She was amazing. So was Honor. She just completely got it."

ABOVE Eva Whittaker: Mebh's mother, Irish actress Whittaker, recorded her lines.

RIGHT The animators created the characters from the story, including Mebh's mother, Honor, and the wolf, Robyn.





ROBYN



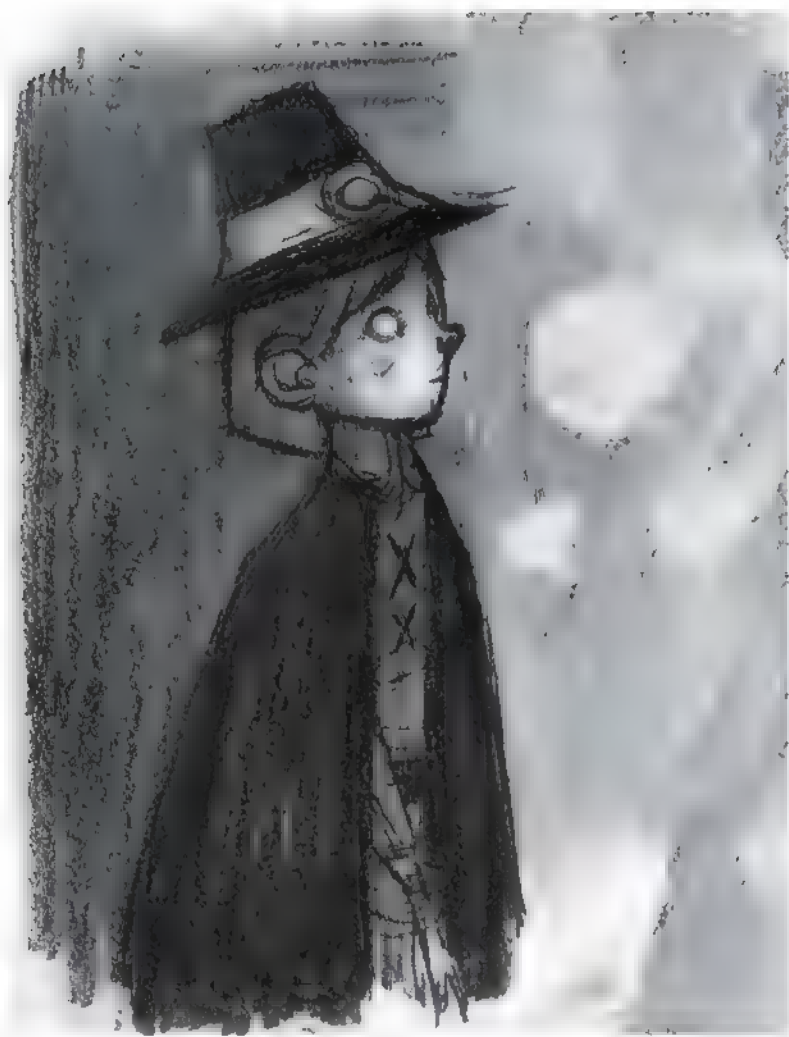
"If Robyn had stayed a boy, I don't think the stakes in the story would have been the same. As a boy, if Robyn had achieved his goal of becoming a hunter, it would have been seen as a positive thing, because it would follow accepted gender roles. The drama and the conflict are more interesting because she is a girl. I knew Robyn as a girl; I never really felt the character as a boy."

TOMM MOORE, CO-DIRECTOR



OPPOSITE Robyn doesn't see the forest for the trees. As a boy, she would have been seen as a positive thing, because it would follow accepted gender roles. The drama and the conflict are more interesting because she is a girl.

DICHT The forest is a place of mystery and danger. Robyn is a girl who is seen as a positive thing, because it would follow accepted gender roles. The drama and the conflict are more interesting because she is a girl.

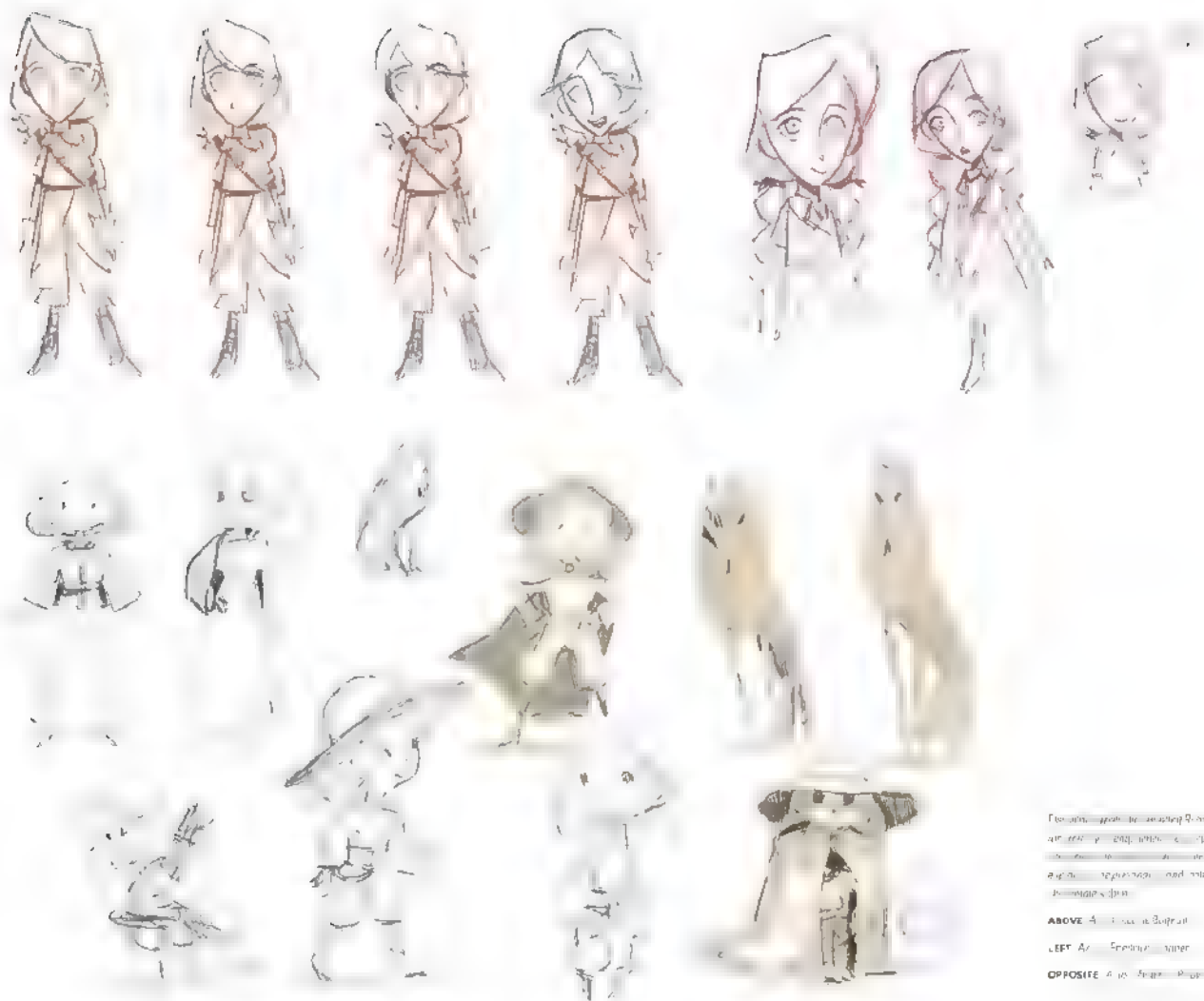


LEFT A character sketch of a figure wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a dark, textured coat, standing against a dark, textured background.

ABOVE A stylized, cartoonish portrait of a character with blonde hair and a black and white outfit, set within a dark, rounded rectangular frame.

OPPOSITE A stylized, cartoonish portrait of a character with blonde hair and a black and white outfit, set within a dark, rounded rectangular frame.



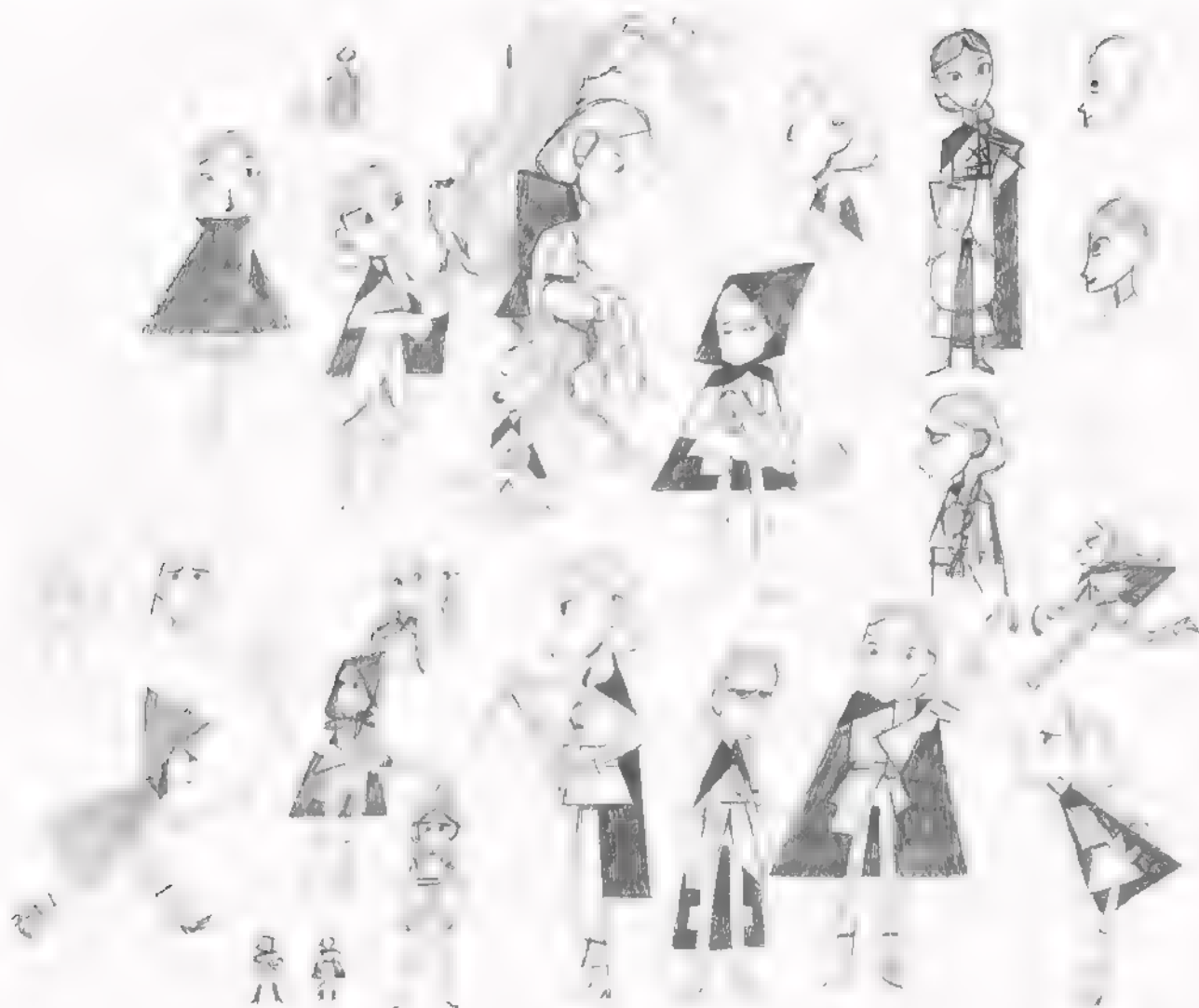


Characters from the anime series *One Piece*, including the main cast and other characters, drawn in a simple, sketchy style.

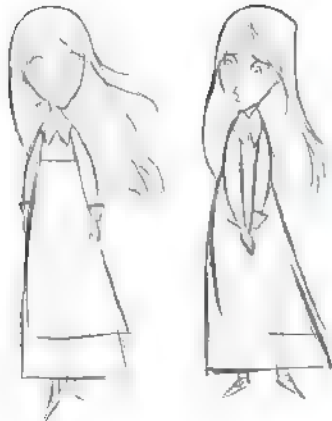
ABOVE: A collection of characters.

LEFT: A character in a hat.

OPPOSITE: A character in a hat.







5

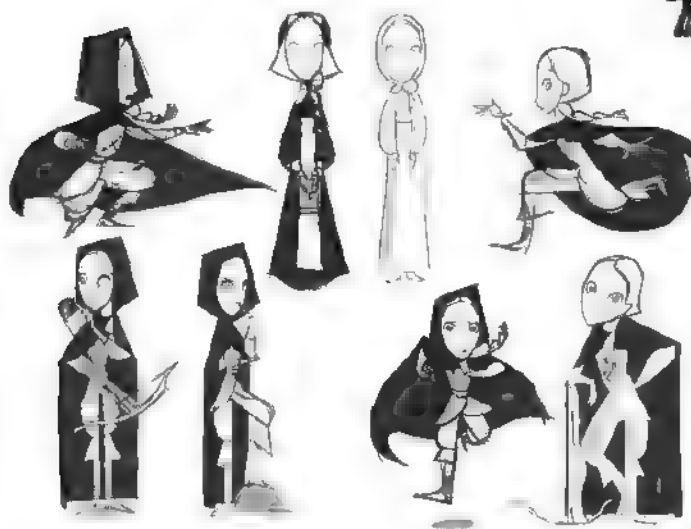


6



7





1. Beziehungen zwischen den Charakteren
 — hier gibt es keine klare Abgrenzung

Aus: Frühling und Herbst

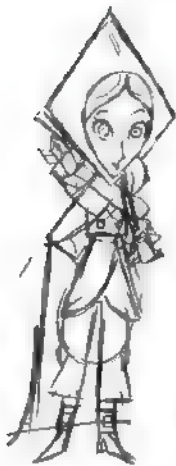
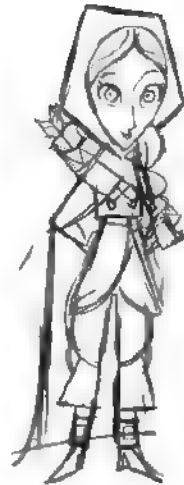
2. Art der Figuren und ihre Charaktere

3. Art der Figuren und ihre Charaktere

4. Art der Figuren und ihre Charaktere

OPPOSITE ohne Markierung der Figuren
 — hier gibt es keine klare Abgrenzung





1. *How many people are there in your family?*
 2. *What do you do for a living?*

* 4714 1617 1620

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5. $\exists x (x \in A \wedge \exists y (y \in B \wedge x \neq y)) \rightarrow \exists x (x \in A \wedge \forall y (y \in B \rightarrow x = y))$

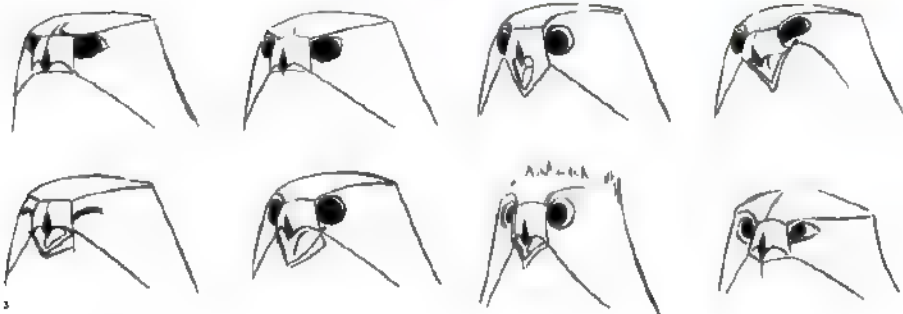


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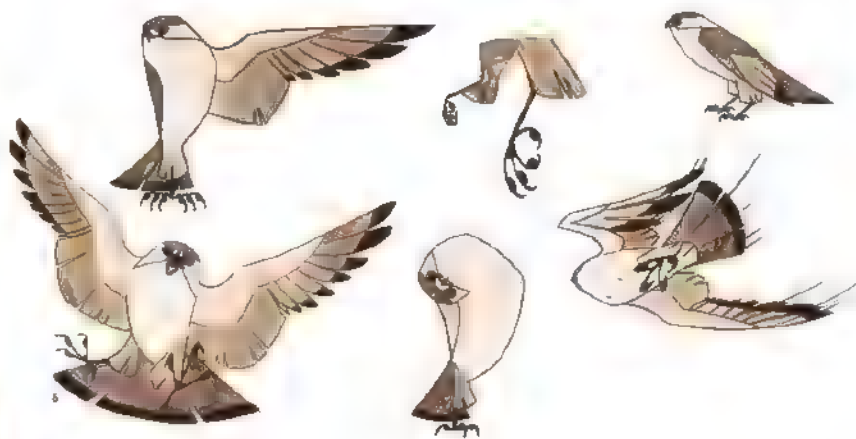
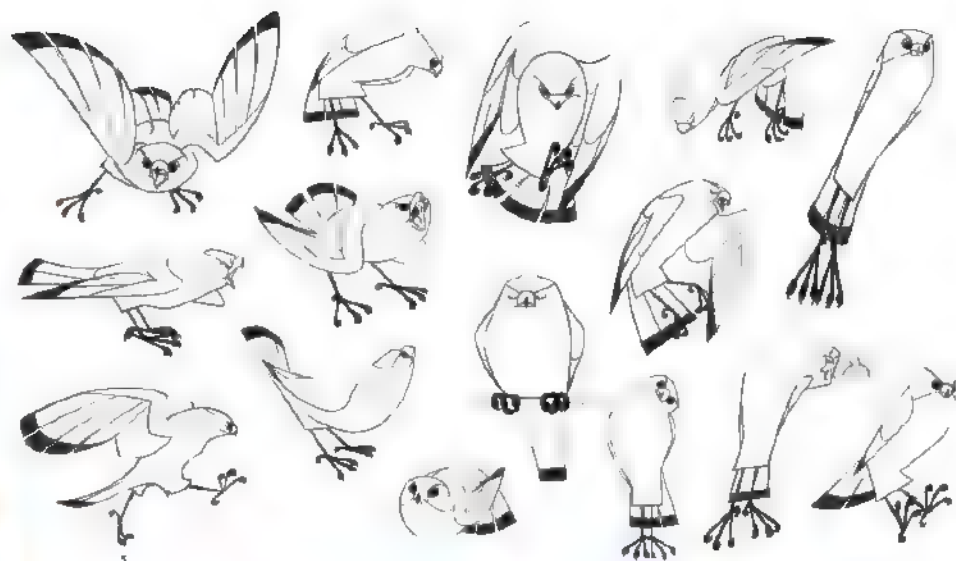


5

MERLYN



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BILL



"Bill seems a decent chap, other than that he's in Cromwell's army. He has to do what he's told. He follows orders. He's a simple man. He becomes a good father when he discovers Robyn has her own life with her own dreams for the future. By the end, he realizes she's an intelligent young woman."

SEAN BEAN
VOICE OF BILL



Bill is a simple man, a decent chap, other than that he's in Cromwell's army. He has to do what he's told. He follows orders. He's a simple man. He becomes a good father when he discovers Robyn has her own life with her own dreams for the future. By the end, he realizes she's an intelligent young woman.

LEFT Bill is a simple man, a decent chap, other than that he's in Cromwell's army. He has to do what he's told. He follows orders. He's a simple man. He becomes a good father when he discovers Robyn has her own life with her own dreams for the future. By the end, he realizes she's an intelligent young woman.

ABOVE Bill is a simple man, a decent chap, other than that he's in Cromwell's army. He has to do what he's told. He follows orders. He's a simple man. He becomes a good father when he discovers Robyn has her own life with her own dreams for the future. By the end, he realizes she's an intelligent young woman.

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3-4 Bill is a simple man, a decent chap, other than that he's in Cromwell's army. He has to do what he's told. He follows orders. He's a simple man. He becomes a good father when he discovers Robyn has her own life with her own dreams for the future. By the end, he realizes she's an intelligent young woman.


5 Bill is a simple man, a decent chap, other than that he's in Cromwell's army. He has to do what he's told. He follows orders. He's a simple man. He becomes a good father when he discovers Robyn has her own life with her own dreams for the future. By the end, he realizes she's an intelligent young woman.

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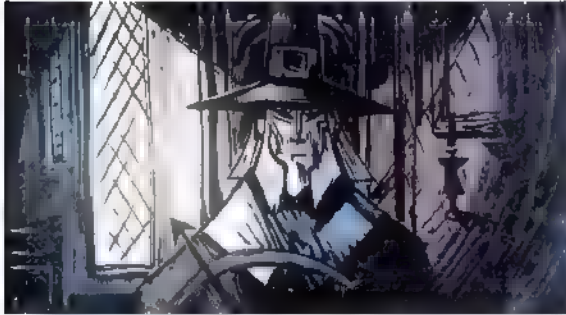




06  Characters

1. The first character is a man with a long, white tunic and a red and white striped tunic. He is wearing a tall, pointed hat. He is standing next to a man in a long, dark coat and a hat.

2. The second character is a man with a long, white tunic and a red and white striped tunic. He is wearing a tall, pointed hat. He is standing next to a man in a long, dark coat and a hat.



1



2



1. The first figure is a man with a large, dark, triangular beard and a white shirt.

2. The second figure is a woman with long, dark hair and a white shirt.

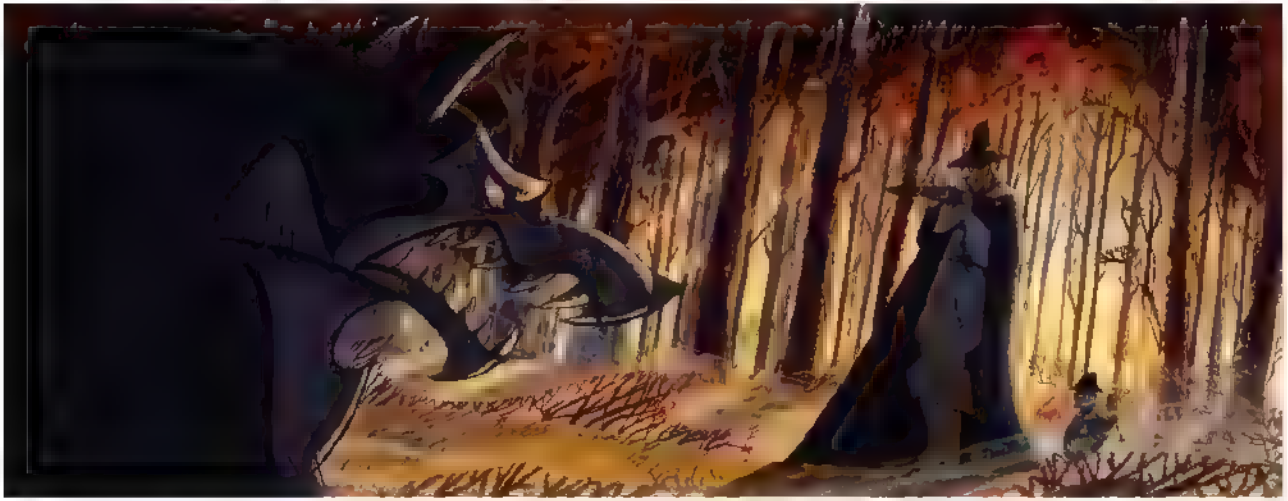
3. The third figure is a man wearing a dark hat and a white shirt, standing in a dark, textured environment.

4. The fourth figure is a woman wearing a dark hat and a white shirt, standing in a dark, textured environment.

5. The fifth figure is a man wearing a dark hat and a white shirt, standing in a dark, textured environment.



5



2

3



BILL with cloak



BILL with hood up



BILL with hat



BILL soldier



BILL in pajamas



RED CHECKS, SCARF,
TOP ARMS, TIGHTS
Blue is a bit for a bit of time
moulding and it's not too far from done



BILL



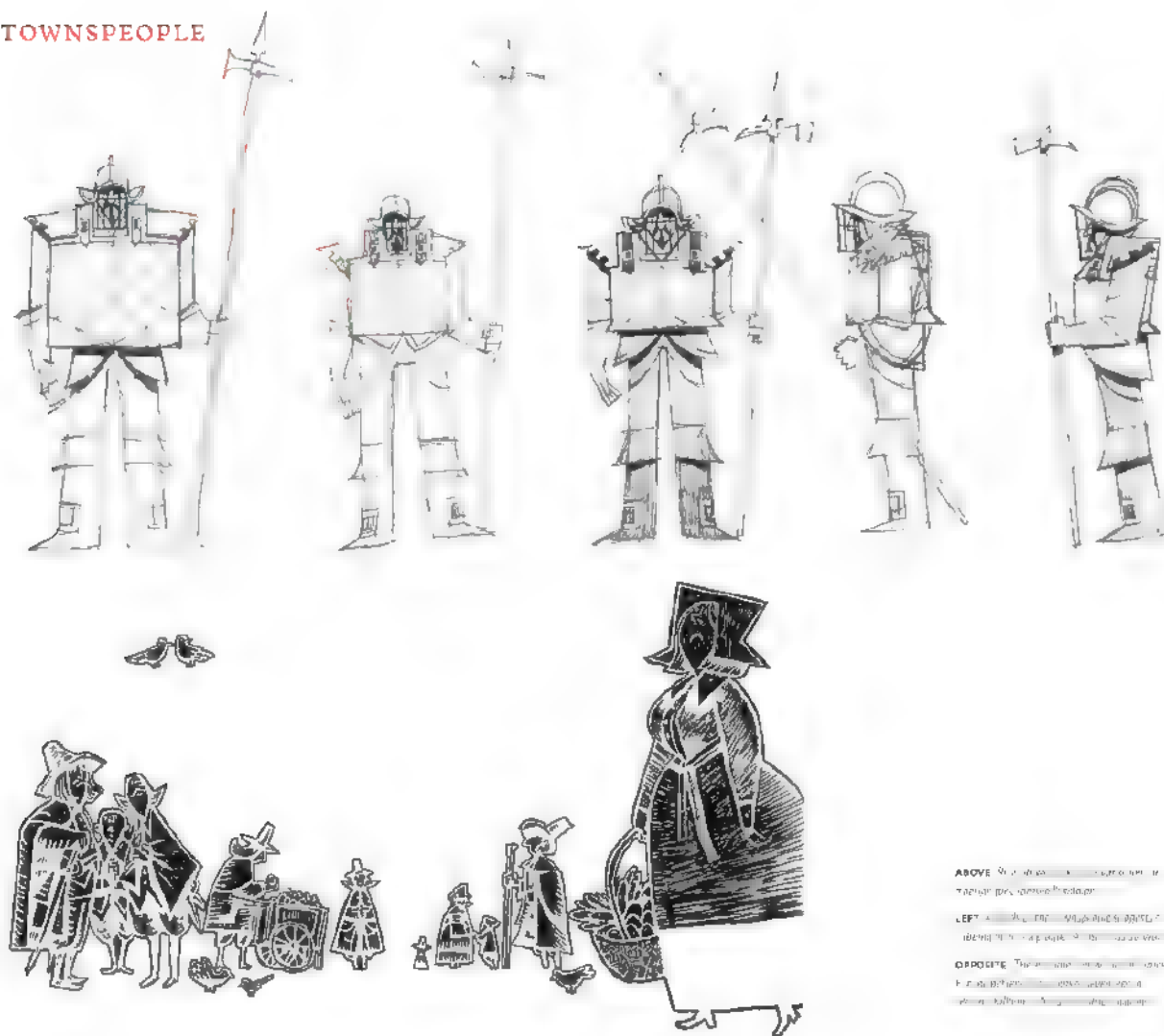
BILL side



BILL gloves OFF

1. Bill's main character is a grumpy, grumpy, grumpy...
 2. Bill is a grumpy, grumpy, grumpy, grumpy, grumpy...
 3. Bill is a grumpy, grumpy, grumpy, grumpy, grumpy...
- THIS DOES** Bill is a grumpy, grumpy, grumpy, grumpy, grumpy...

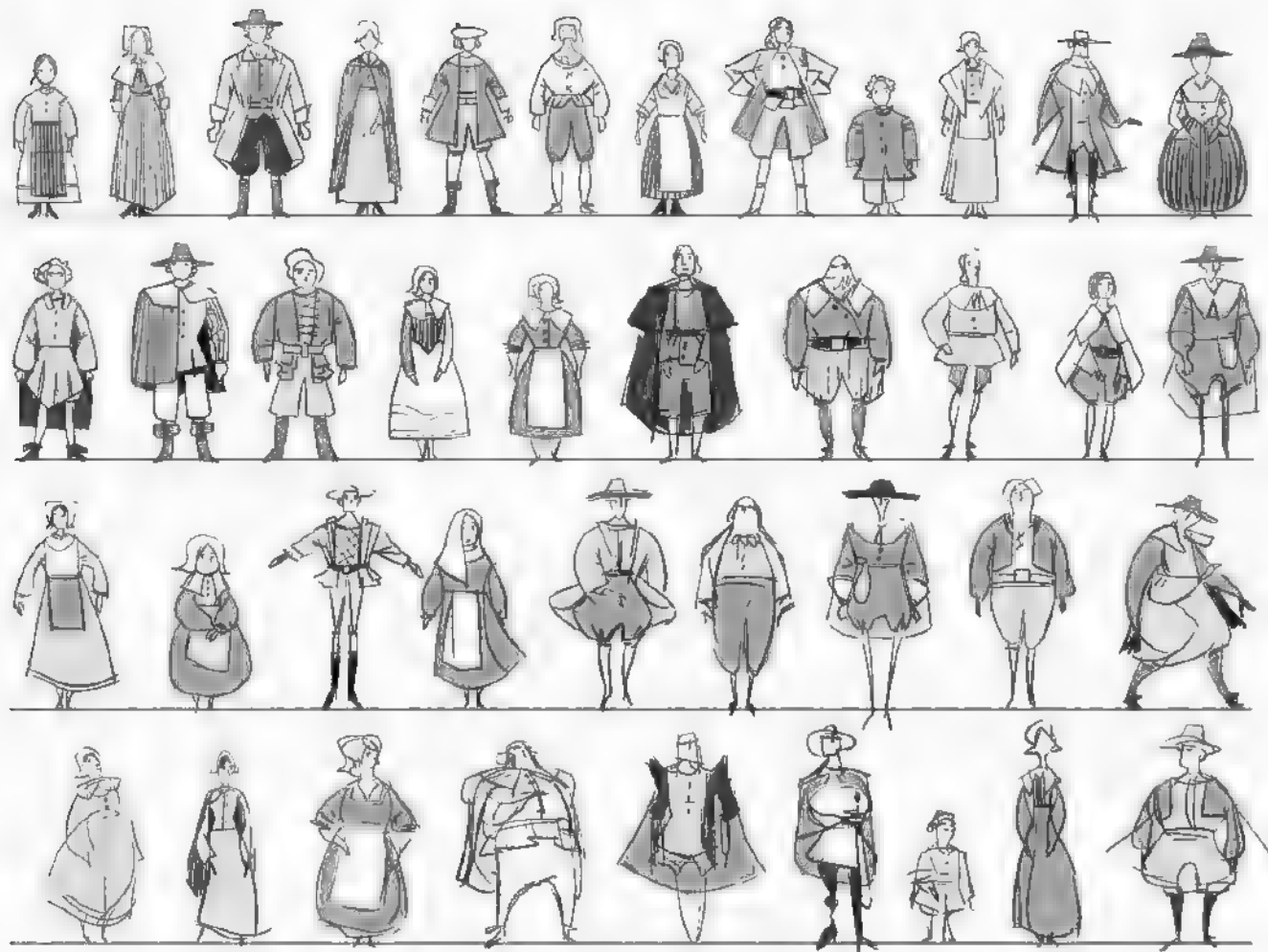
TOWNSPEOPLE



ABOVE The figures are designed to be easily recognizable and to have a strong visual impact.

LEFT The figures are designed to be easily recognizable and to have a strong visual impact.

OPPOSITE The figures are designed to be easily recognizable and to have a strong visual impact.



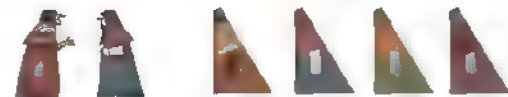




PURITAN (woman) DRESS
In general the heavier will be the lighter colours,
but we can have some dark ones too.



TRAVELLER (woman) DRESS
Slightly more ornate than the Puritan. We don't have
much of this for a Puritan's travel. This one
will make light colours match with the rest.



PURITAN (man) SUIT
In general very dark, almost black, and dark
colours in the hair.



FARMER (woman) DRESS
All in dark, almost black, and dark
colours. Lighter than the Puritan's, but not
more "natural" style.



TRAVELLER (man) CLOTHES
Slightly more ornate than the Puritan. We don't have
much of this for a Puritan's travel. This one
will make light colours match with the rest.



OPPOSITE AND LEFT
The character's face is the same as the
character's face is the same as the
character's face is the same as the

ABOVE
The character's face is the same as the
character's face is the same as the
character's face is the same as the

SKIN COLOUR



HAIR COLOUR

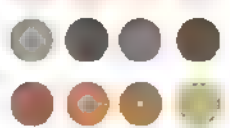




Illustration by *Art & Architecture* in *Quintessence*

ABOVE Illustration by *Art & Architecture* in *Quintessence*

RIGHT Art & Architecture

OPPOSITE TOP Art & Architecture

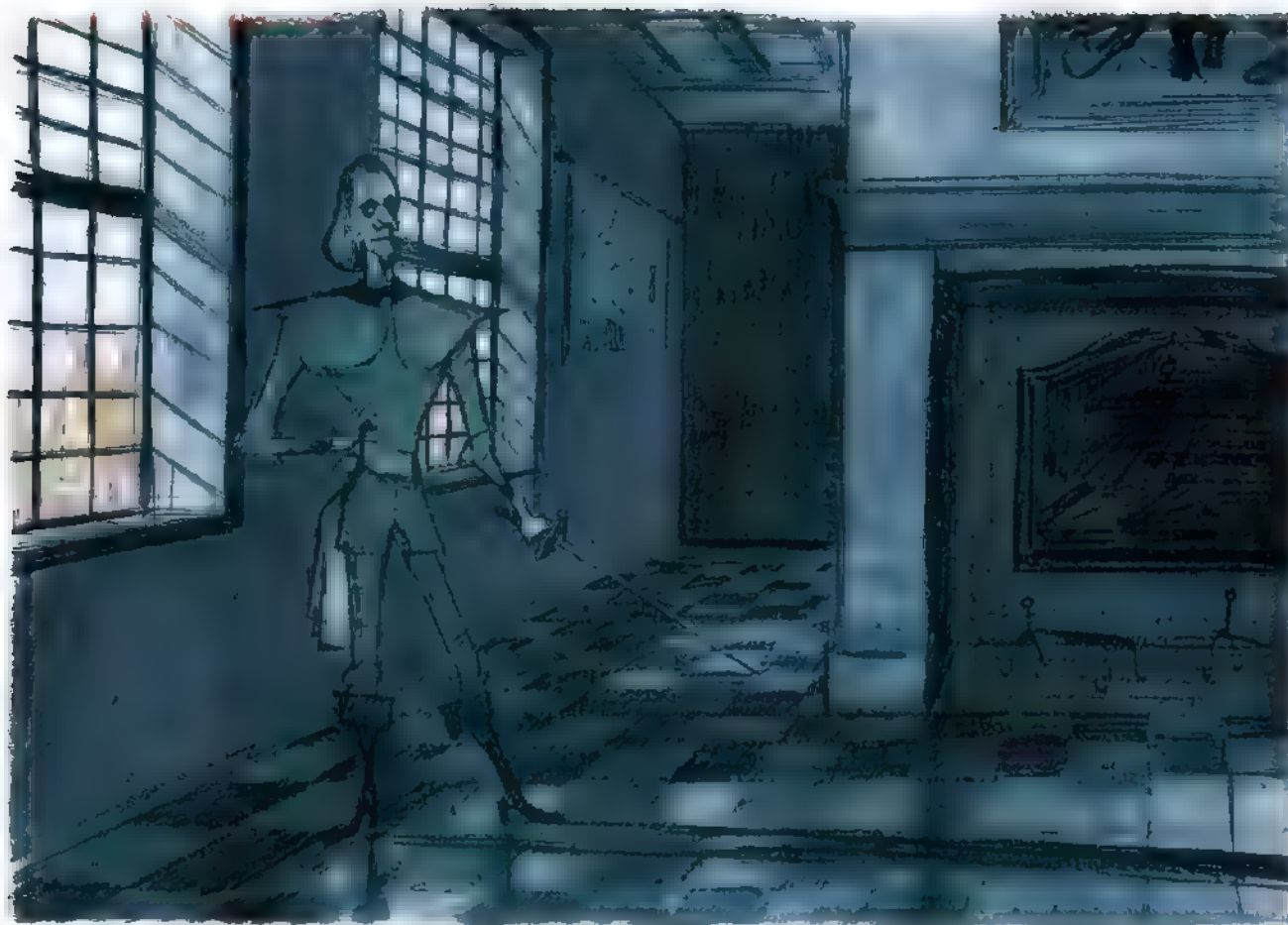
OPPOSITE BOTTOM Art & Architecture

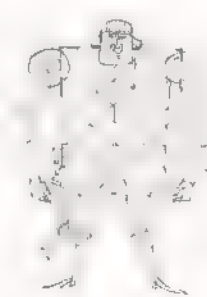
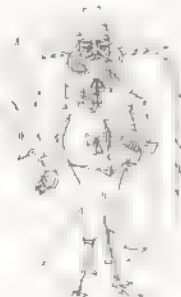
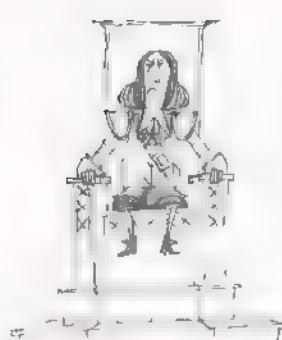
Illustration by *Art & Architecture*





LORD PROTECTOR

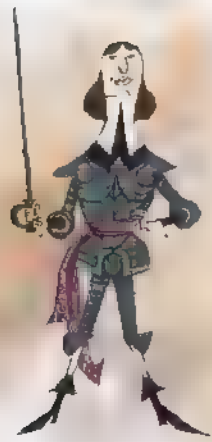




The design for the Lord Protector required the artists to create a character who was both a powerful and a fictionalized character.

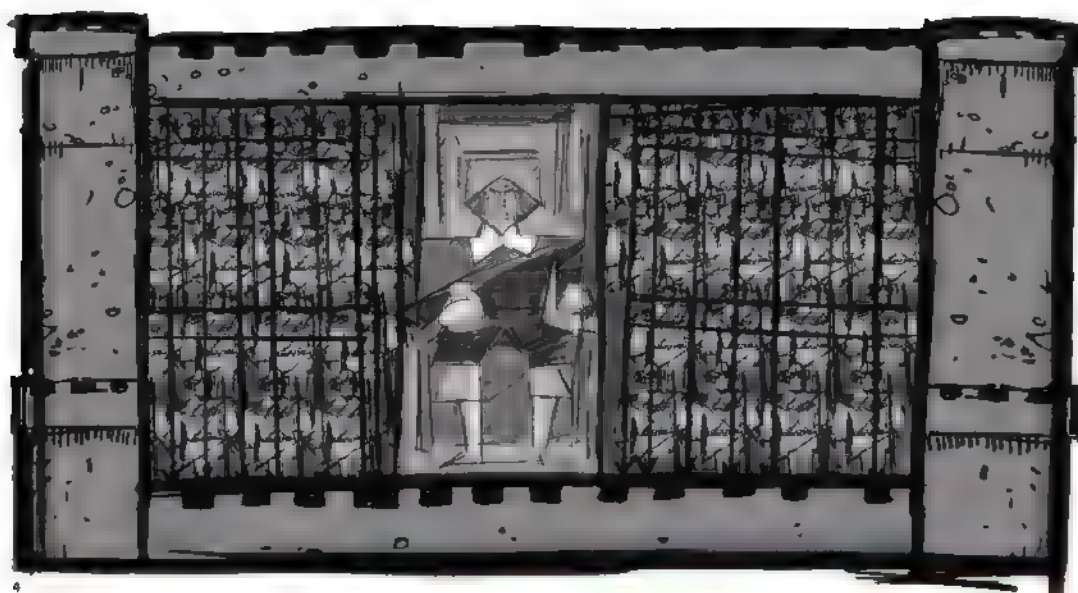
OPPOSITE Cyndi Pedraza imagined a tall, thin woman with a long, flowing robe.

THIS PAGE Ross Stewart explores possible designs for the character in these stylized sketches.

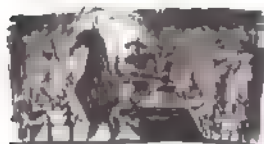


2

3

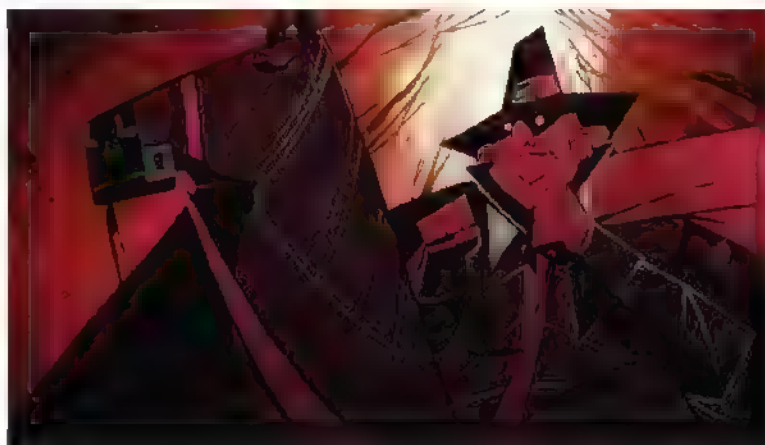


4

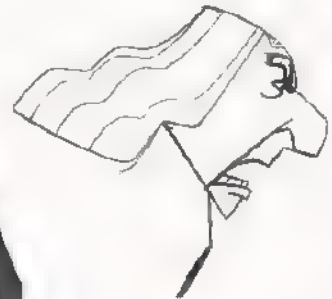
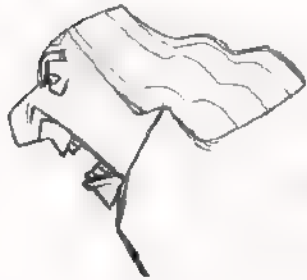


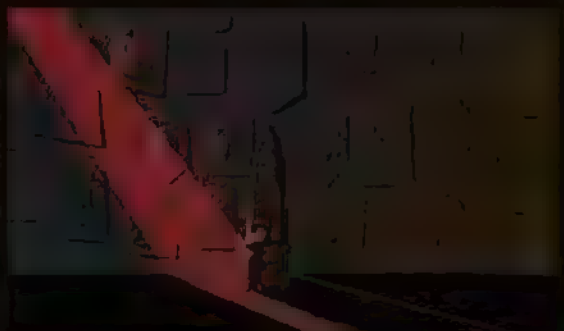
5

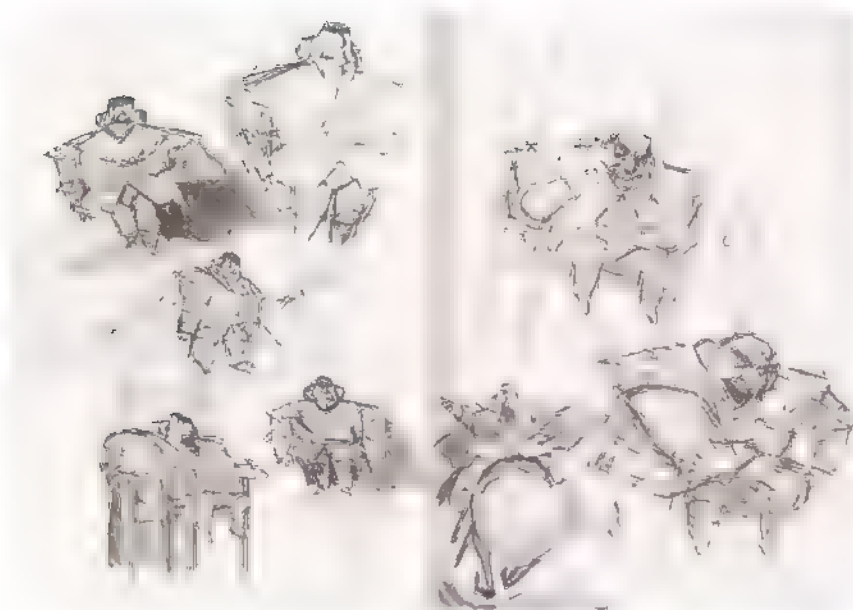
1. 2. The character is sitting at a desk, reading a book. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from the window.
3. The character is sitting at a desk, reading a book. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from the window.
4. The character is sitting at a desk, reading a book. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from the window.
5. The character is sitting at a desk, reading a book. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from the window.
6. The character is sitting at a desk, reading a book. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from the window.



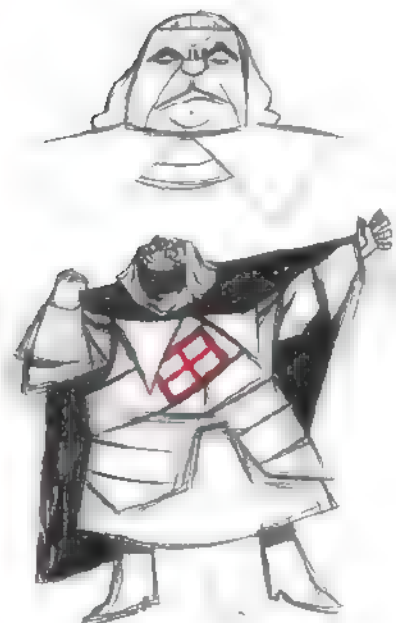
6







4



5

ОПРОС ТЕ. 4. Мисли, думи, дела, които са свързани с
теб, с твоето мислене, с твоите чувства, с твоите
действия.

1. Какво мислиш за себе си, за своята личност?

2. Какво мислиш за своята личност, за своята личност, за своята личност?

3. Какво мислиш за своята личност, за своята личност, за своята личност?

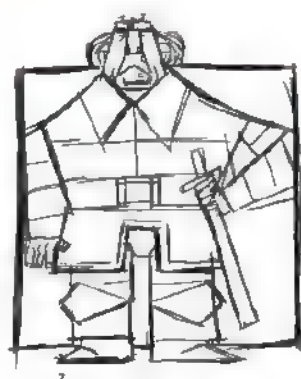
4. Какво мислиш за своята личност, за своята личност, за своята личност?

5. Какво мислиш за своята личност, за своята личност, за своята личност?

6-8. Какво мислиш за своята личност, за своята личност, за своята личност?



6

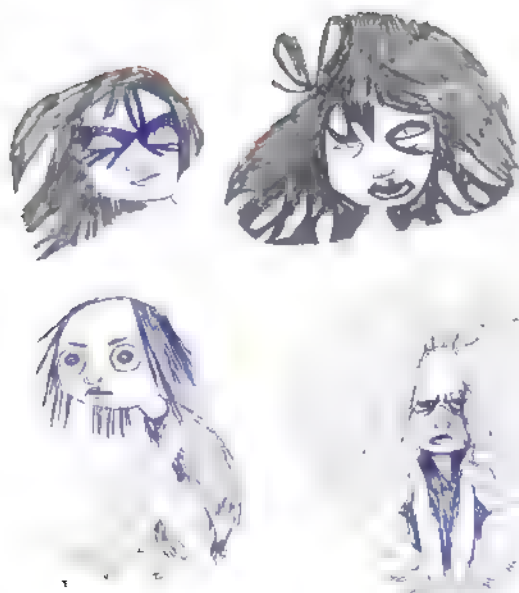


7



8

МЕВН



1. The character is a girl with long dark hair and a headband. She is wearing a white shirt and a black skirt. She is holding a book in her hands.

2. The character is a girl with long dark hair and a bow. She is wearing a white shirt and a black skirt. She is holding a book in her hands.

3. The character is a girl with long dark hair and a headband. She is wearing a white shirt and a black skirt. She is holding a book in her hands.

4. The character is a girl with long dark hair and a headband. She is wearing a white shirt and a black skirt. She is holding a book in her hands.

5. The character is a girl with long dark hair and a headband. She is wearing a white shirt and a black skirt. She is holding a book in her hands.

6. The character is a girl with long dark hair and a headband. She is wearing a white shirt and a black skirt. She is holding a book in her hands.

7. The character is a girl with long dark hair and a headband. She is wearing a white shirt and a black skirt. She is holding a book in her hands.



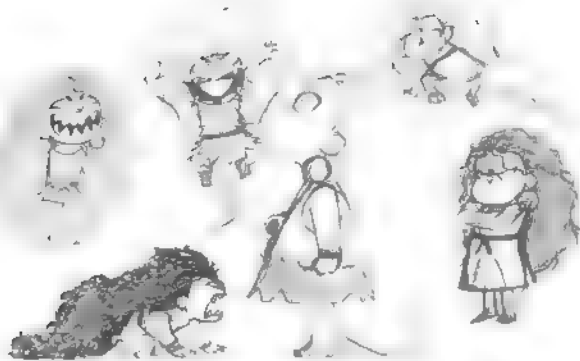


5

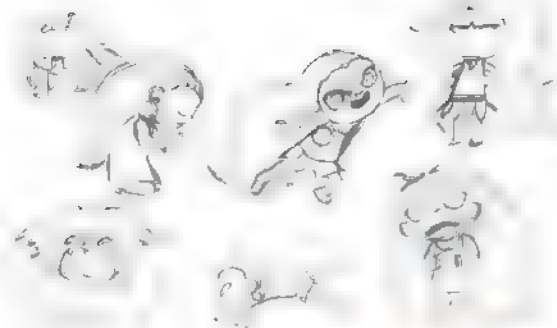


6





4



5



6



1. The image is a sketch of a character with a large, jagged, toothy mouth and a small body.

2. The image is a sketch of a character with a large, round head and a small body.

3. The image is a sketch of a character with a large, round head and a small body.

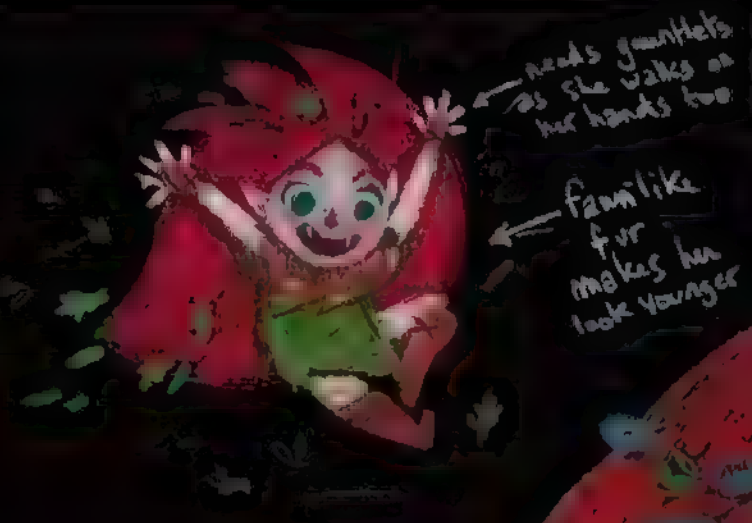
4. The image is a sketch of a character with a large, round head and a small body.

5. The image is a sketch of a character with a large, round head and a small body.



7



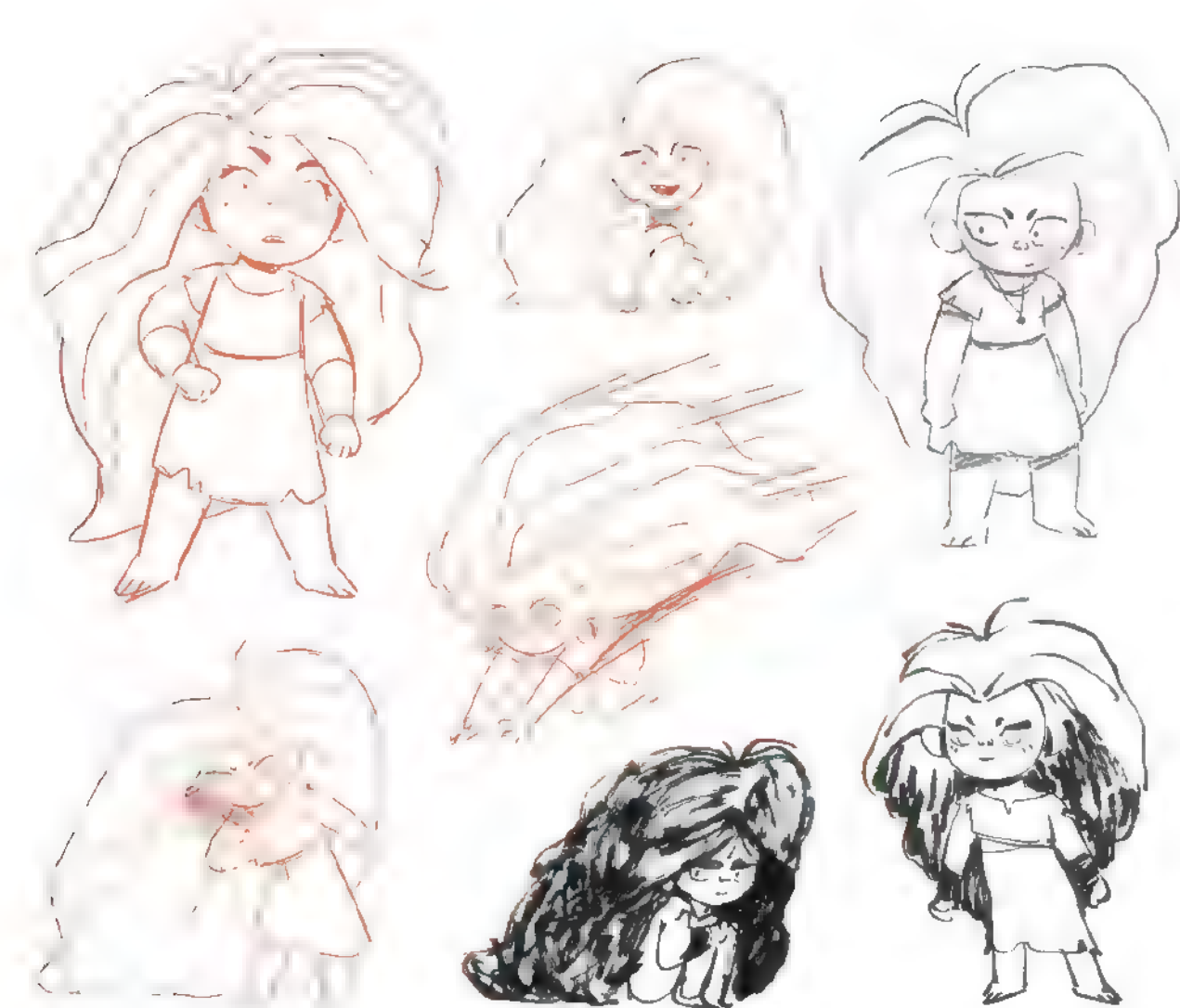


needs gauntlets
as she walks on
her hands too

funlike
fur
makes her
look younger



WING SPREAD: The vivid colours in
Uly Bernard's pastel sketches suggest
Mabry's vibrant personality.





1

OPPOSITE On opposite sides of the page, the character is shown in a different pose.

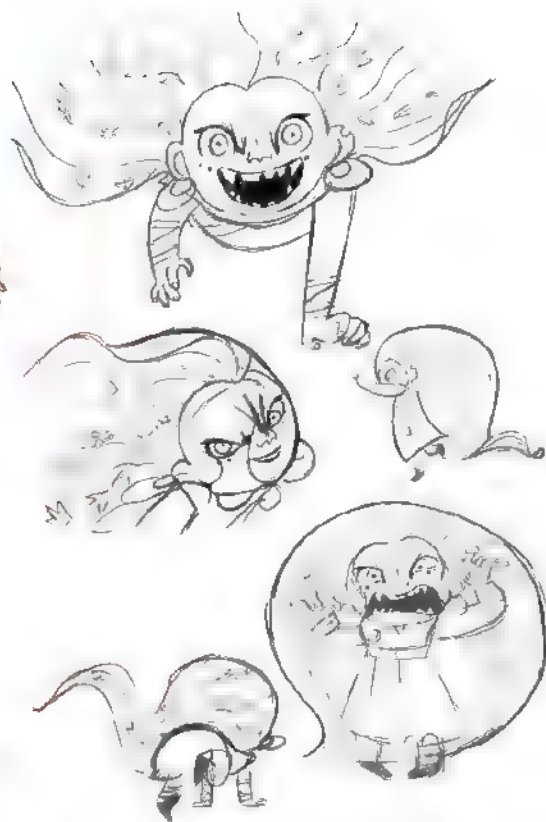
1. The character is shown in a different pose, with a different expression and a different background.

2. The character is shown in a different pose, with a different expression and a different background.



2





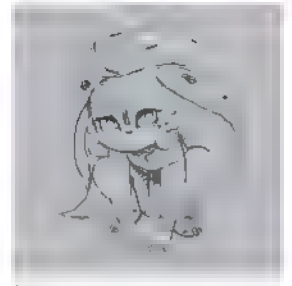
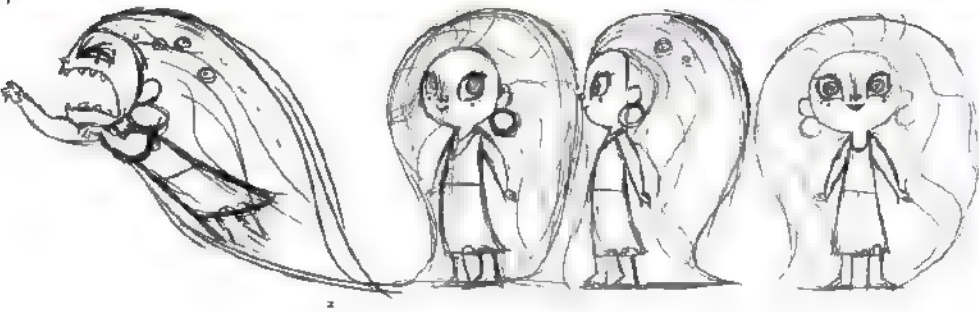
1. The character is a small, round, red, and black. The character is a small, round, red, and black. The character is a small, round, red, and black. The character is a small, round, red, and black.

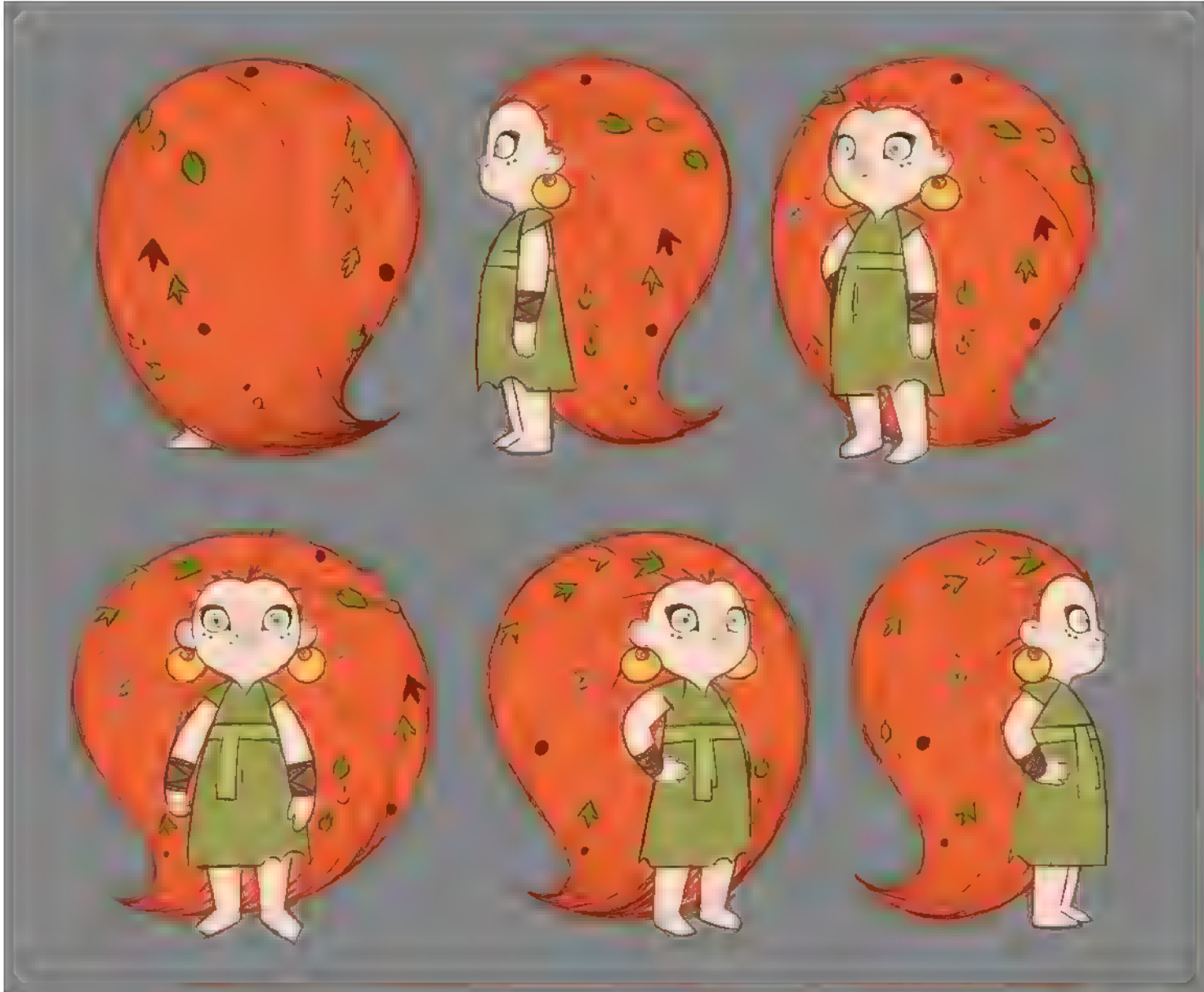
THIS PAGE: A character with a large, round head and a small body.

1. Character design: a small, round, red, and black.

2. A character with a large, round head and a small body.

3. A character with a large, round head and a small body.







1



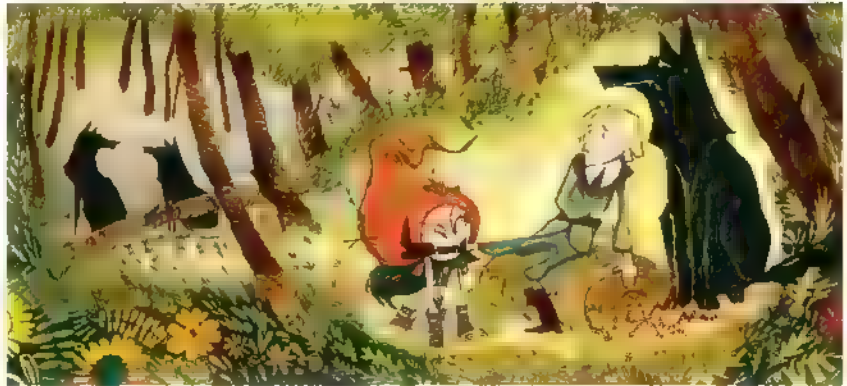
2

OPPOSITE De witte salm, Andera, uit
het witte, witte, witte, witte, witte,
Andera, uit.

1. witte, witte, witte, witte, witte, witte,
Andera, uit, uit, uit, uit, uit, uit,
Andera, uit.

2. witte, witte, witte, witte, witte, witte,
Andera, uit, uit, uit, uit, uit, uit,
Andera, uit.

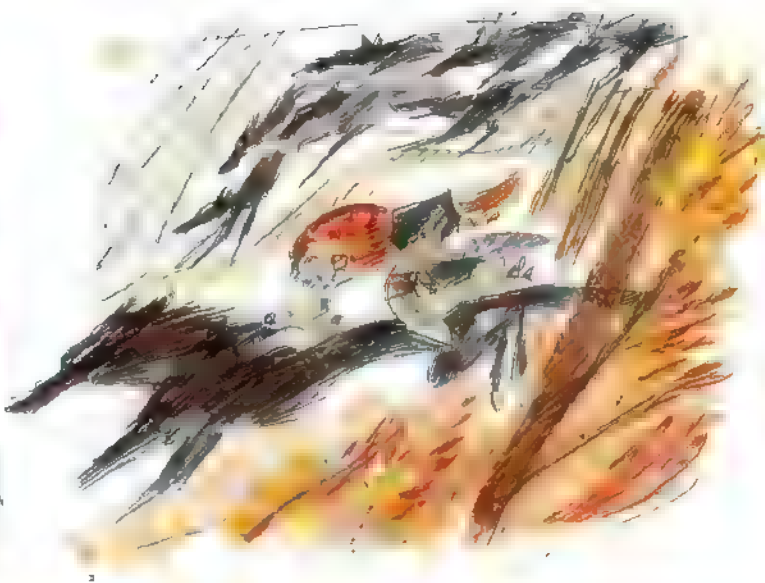
3. witte, witte, witte, witte, witte, witte,
Andera, uit, uit, uit, uit, uit, uit,
Andera, uit.



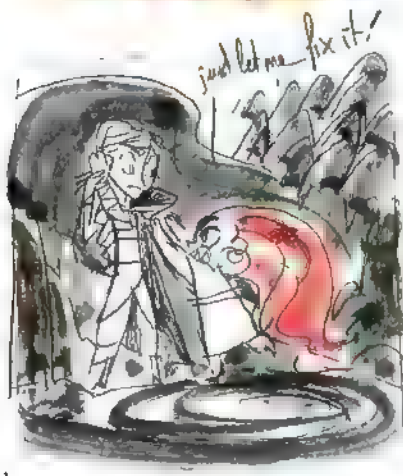
3



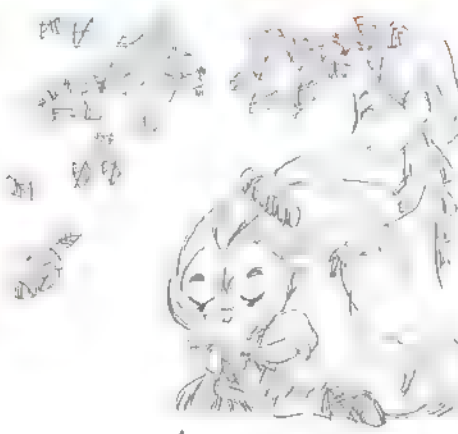
1



2



3



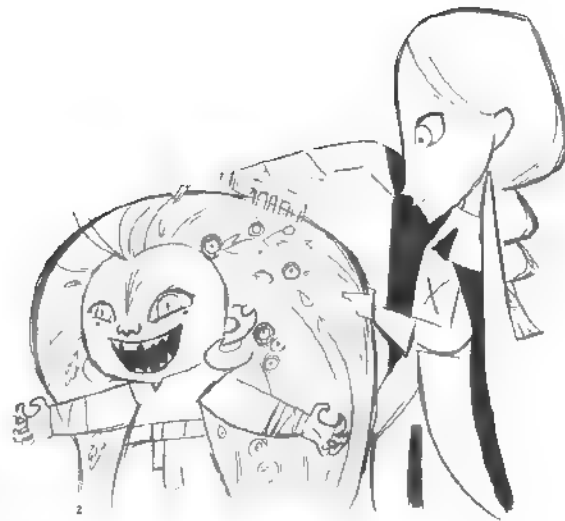
4

1-3: The character is looking up at the tree. The background is a mix of green and brown washes.

4: The character is looking up at the tree. The background is a mix of green and brown washes.

OPPOSITE The character is looking up at the tree. The background is a mix of green and brown washes.





1. The character is looking down at the small character with a sad expression.

2. The character is looking up at the small character with a surprised expression.

3. The character is looking up at the small character with a wide, toothy grin.

4. The character is looking up at the small character with a wide, toothy grin.

5. The character is looking up at the small character with a wide, toothy grin.

3



MOLL

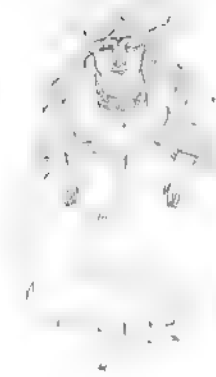
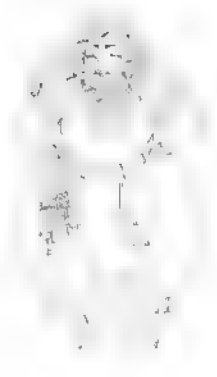


the very best of her kind, and she was not only a good
and a good one, but a good one, and she was not only a good
and a good one, but a good one, and she was not only a good
and a good one, but a good one, and she was not only a good

THIS PAGE The very best of her kind, and she was not only a good
and a good one, but a good one, and she was not only a good

1-2 The very best of her kind, and she was not only a good
and a good one, but a good one, and she was not only a good

3-4 The very best of her kind, and she was not only a good
and a good one, but a good one, and she was not only a good
and a good one, but a good one, and she was not only a good



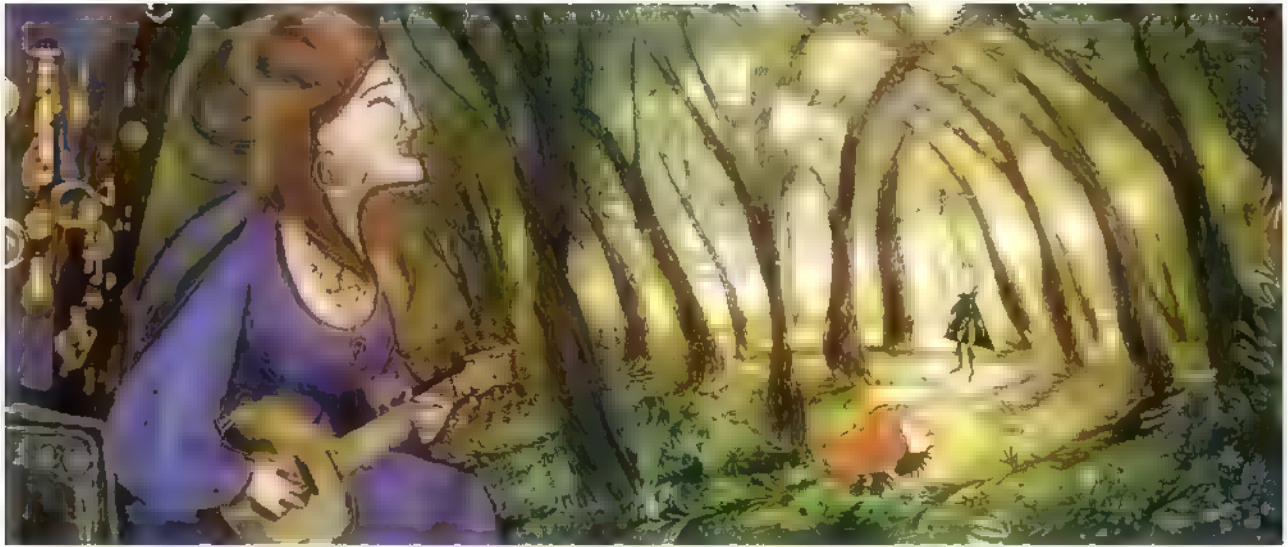
2



3



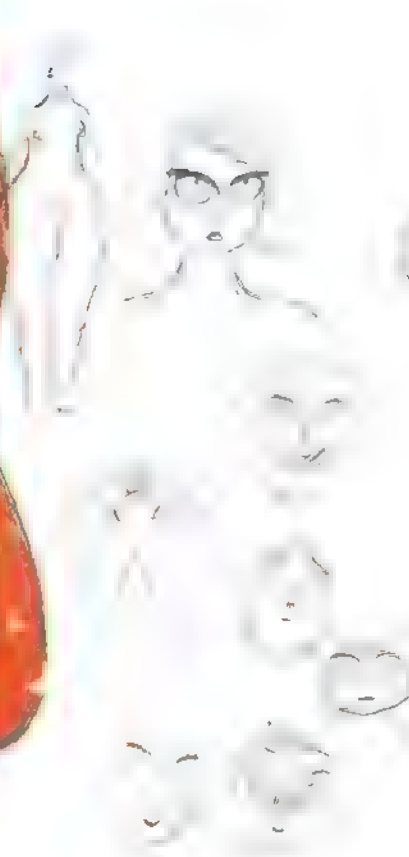
4

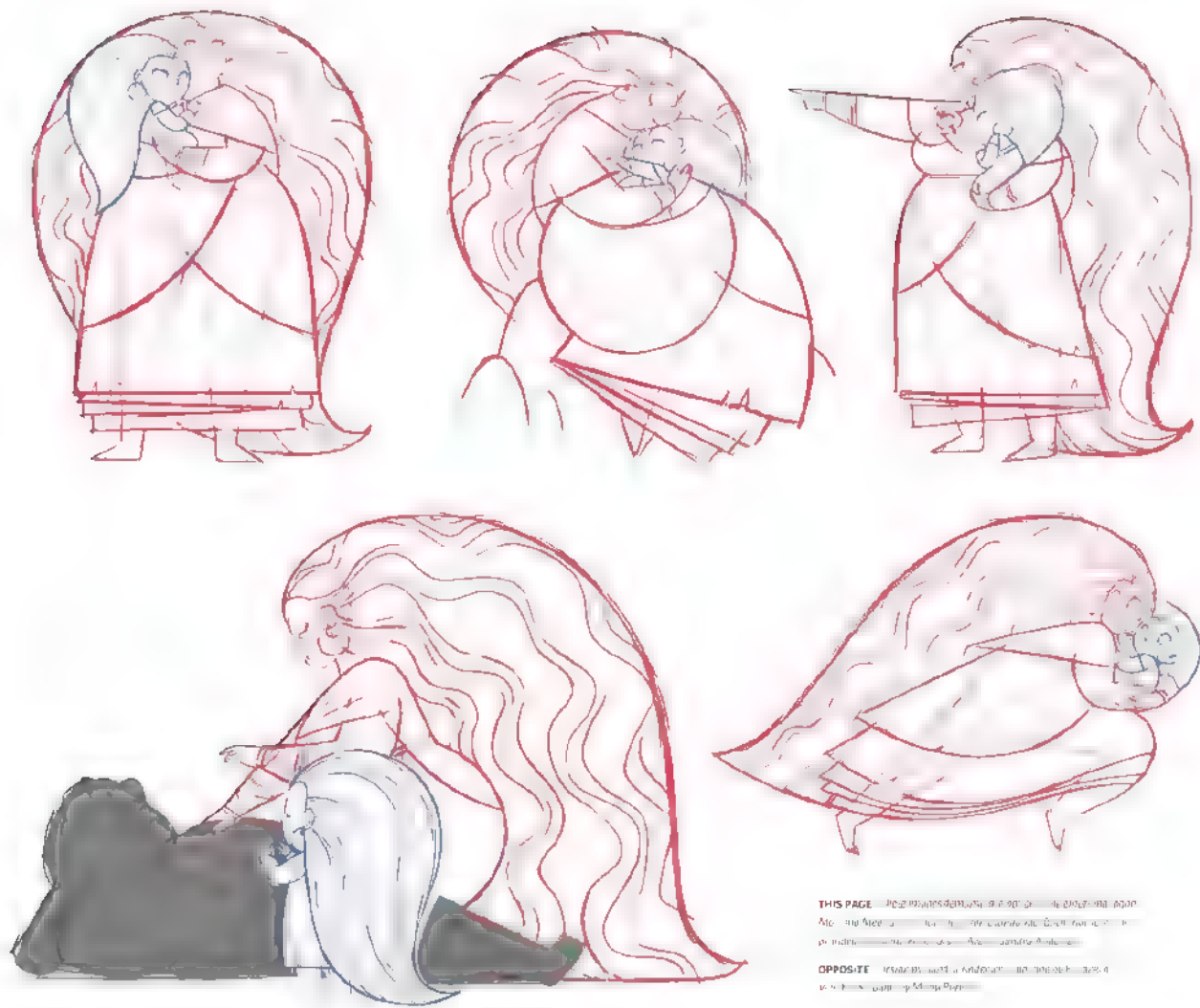


THIS SPACE is the part that does not belong to the main scene. It is the space that is not part of the main scene. It is the space that is not part of the main scene.

OPPOSITE is the space that is opposite to the main scene. It is the space that is opposite to the main scene. It is the space that is opposite to the main scene.





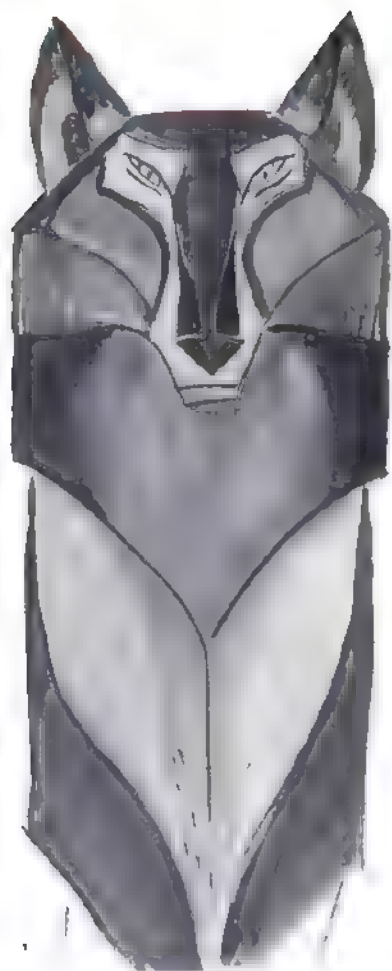


THIS PAGE The character is shown in various poses, including standing, sitting, and kneeling. The sketches are simple line drawings with some shading in the hair and clothing.

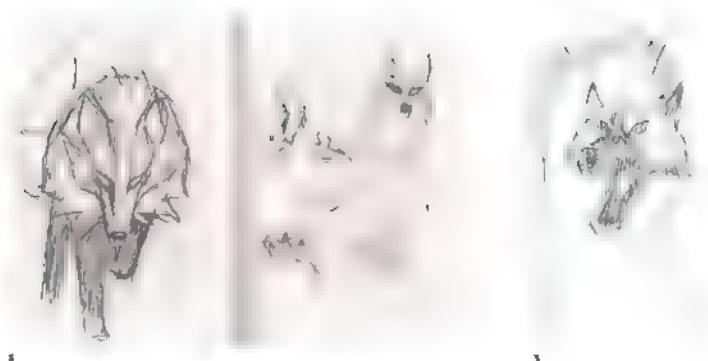
OPPOSITE The character is shown in various poses, including standing, sitting, and kneeling. The sketches are simple line drawings with some shading in the hair and clothing.



WOLVES



1

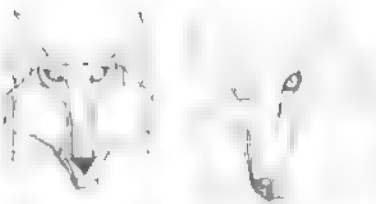


2

3



4



5



5

1. Точный рисунок головы волка. Цвета: серый, белый, черный.

2. Акцент на глаза и уши. Цвета: серый, белый, черный.

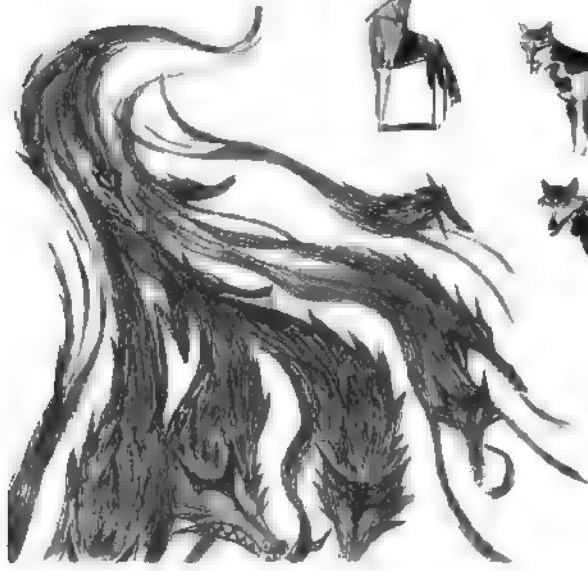
3. Акцент на морду и лапы. Цвета: серый, белый, черный.

4. Акцент на уши и лапы. Цвета: серый, белый, черный.

5. Акцент на глаза и лапы. Цвета: серый, белый, черный.

ОППОЗИТ. Точный рисунок головы волка. Цвета: серый, белый, черный.





1. The first of the three is a small, dark, spotted animal, possibly a cat or small dog, in a crouching position.

2. The second of the three is a small, dark, spotted animal, possibly a cat or small dog, in a crouching position.

3. The third of the three is a small, dark, spotted animal, possibly a cat or small dog, in a crouching position.

4. The fourth of the three is a small, dark, spotted animal, possibly a cat or small dog, in a crouching position.

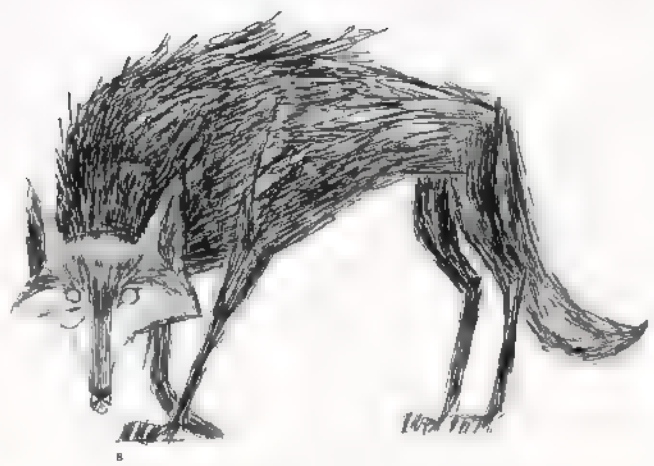
5. The fifth of the three is a small, dark, spotted animal, possibly a cat or small dog, in a crouching position.

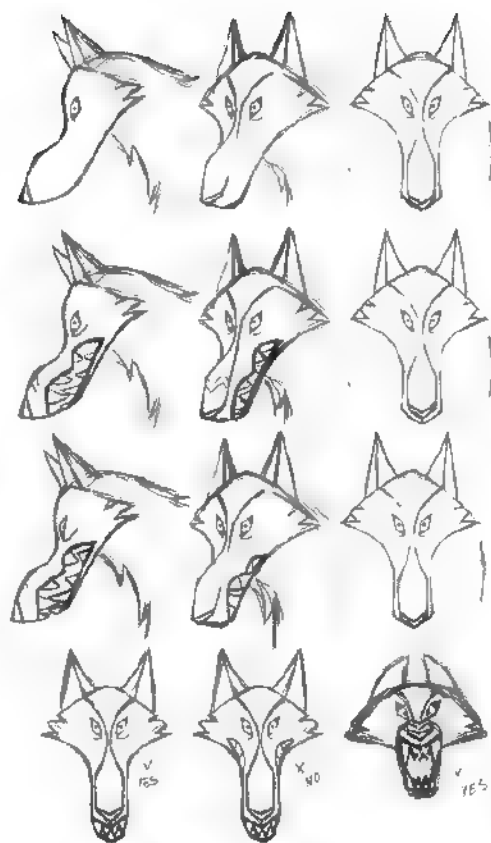
6. The sixth of the three is a small, dark, spotted animal, possibly a cat or small dog, in a crouching position.

7. The seventh of the three is a small, dark, spotted animal, possibly a cat or small dog, in a crouching position.

8. The eighth of the three is a small, dark, spotted animal, possibly a cat or small dog, in a crouching position.

9-10. The ninth and tenth of the three are small, dark, spotted animals, possibly cats or small dogs, in a crouching position.



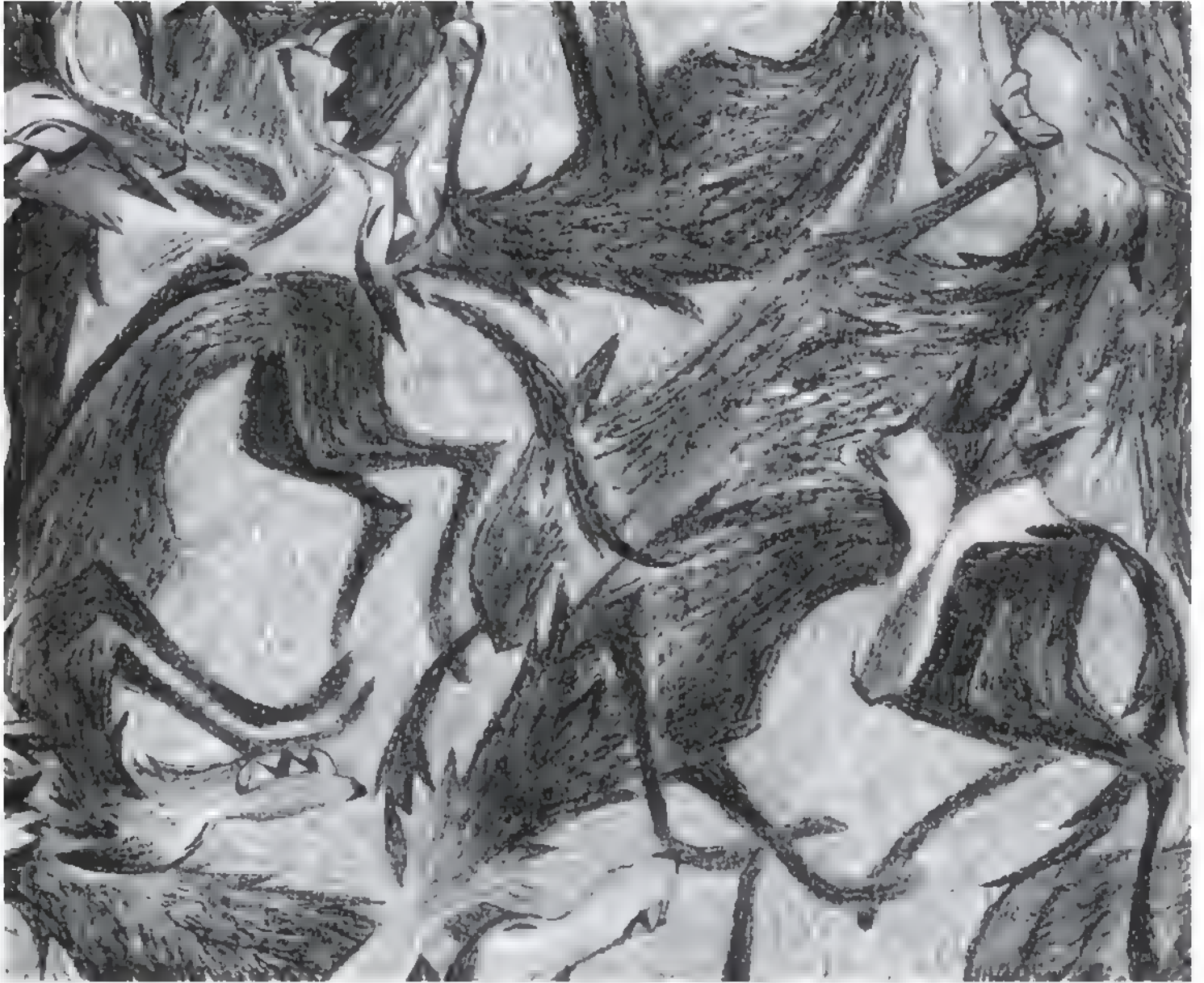


TH-SPAGE A study of the character's face and expressions. The character is a young man with a wide, toothy grin. The sketches show the character's face in various poses and expressions, including smiling, looking forward, and looking to the side.

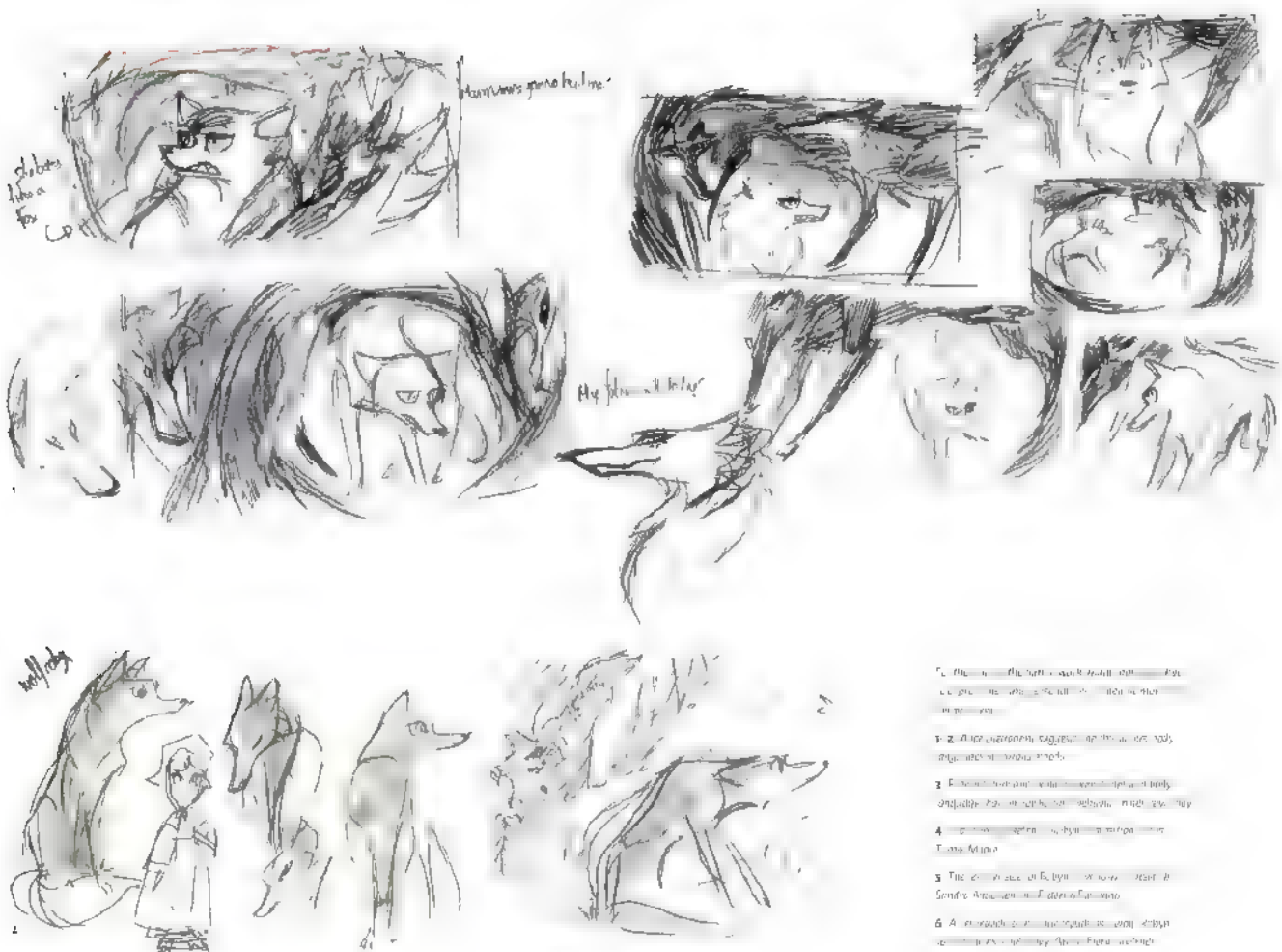
OPPOSITE AND FOLLOWING SPREAD Argentina in the act of a character's face. The character is a young man with a wide, toothy grin. The sketches show the character's face in various poses and expressions, including smiling, looking forward, and looking to the side.





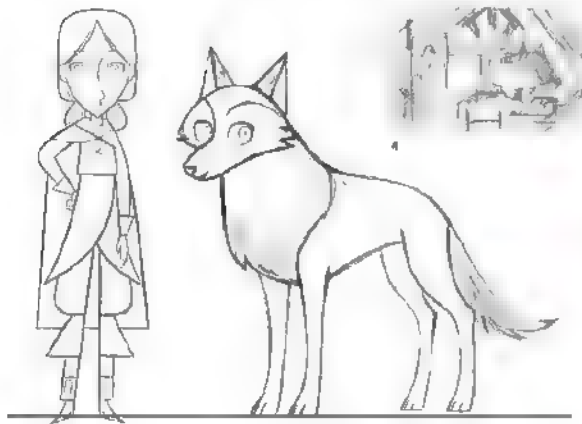


ROBYN AS A WOLF

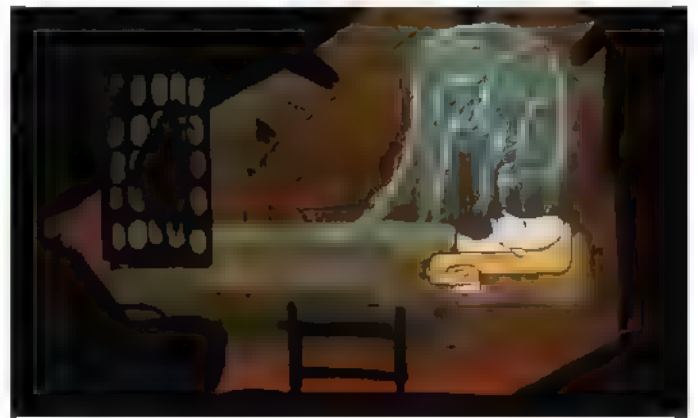




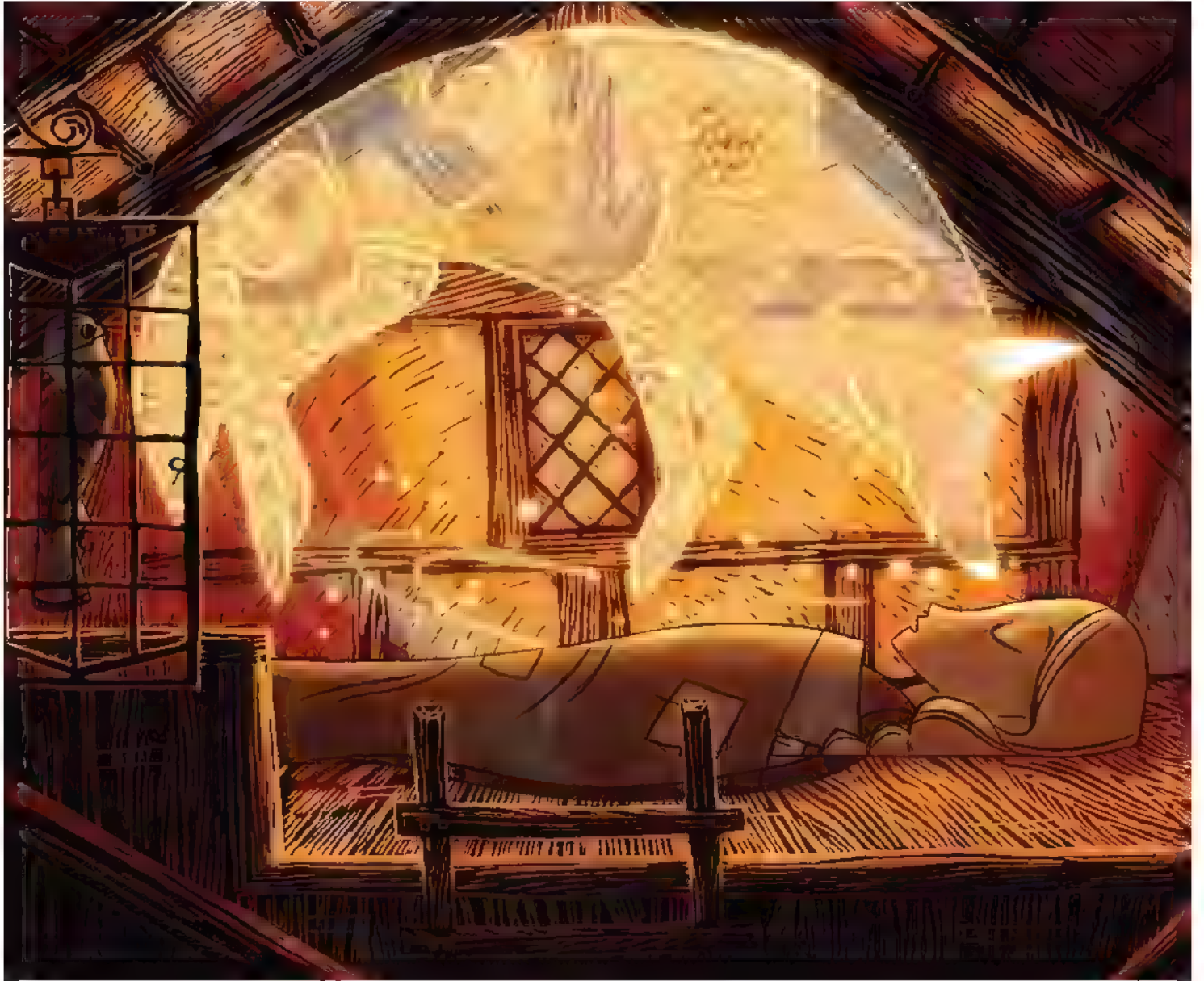
3



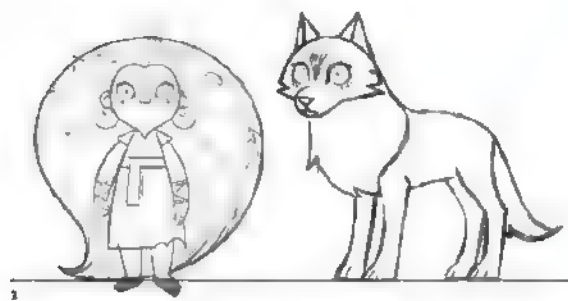
5



6



MEBH AS A WOLF



OPPOSITE A magical moment: Robyn's spirit returns to her body. Characters by Anita Carrigan; backgrounds by various artists.

THIS PAGE The artists clearly enjoy imagining Mebh's shifter's moods.

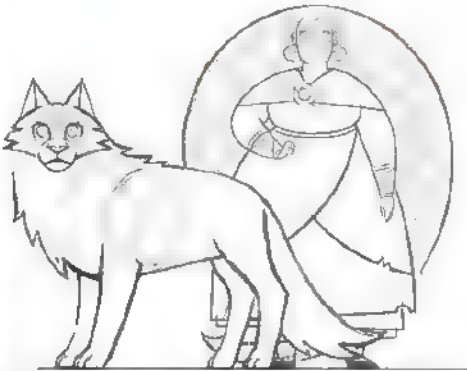
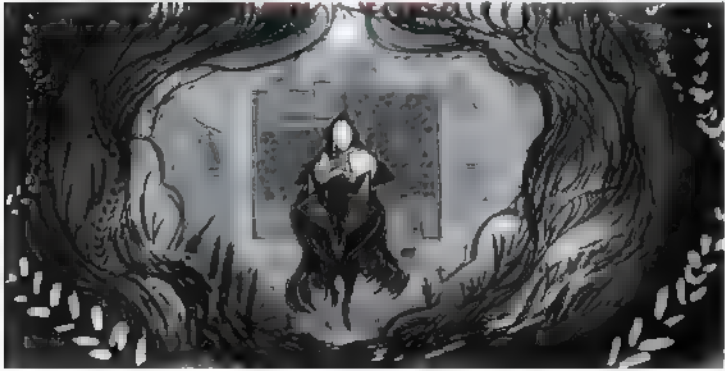
1 In Anna Kaczmarek's drawings, Mebh is as untidy as a wolf as she is as a human.

2 Federico Pirroni's drawings of Mebh as a wolf already feel intimate.

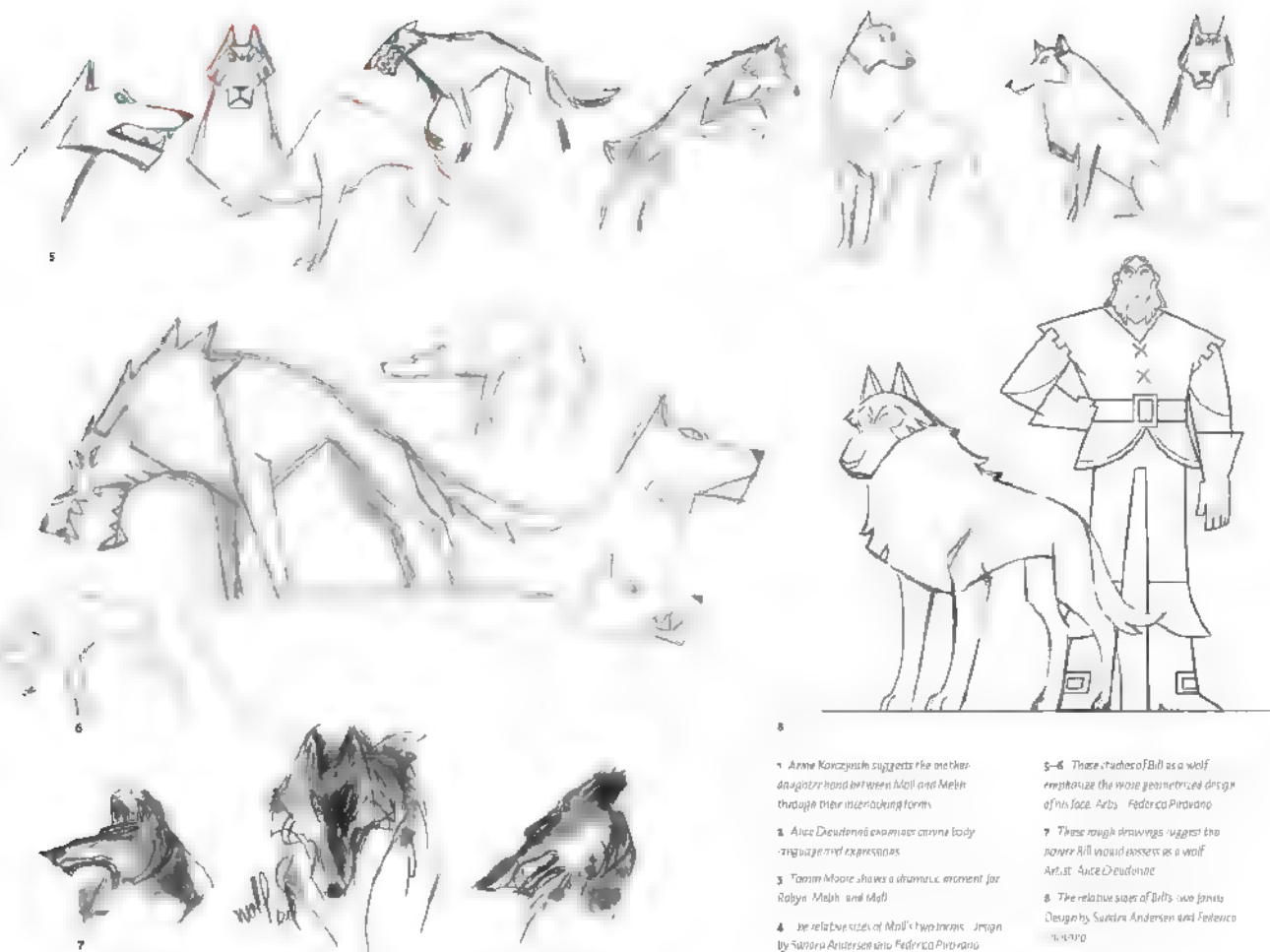
3 The relative sizes of Mebh's two forms. Design by Søren Andersen and Federico Pirroni.

4 Alice Cleveland explores adapting human expressions to a wolf's face.

MOLL AS A WOLF



BILL AS A WOLF



1 Anne Kaczynski suggests the mother-daughter bond between Moll and Melja through their interlocking forms.

2 Alice Deutenius examines canine body language and expressions.

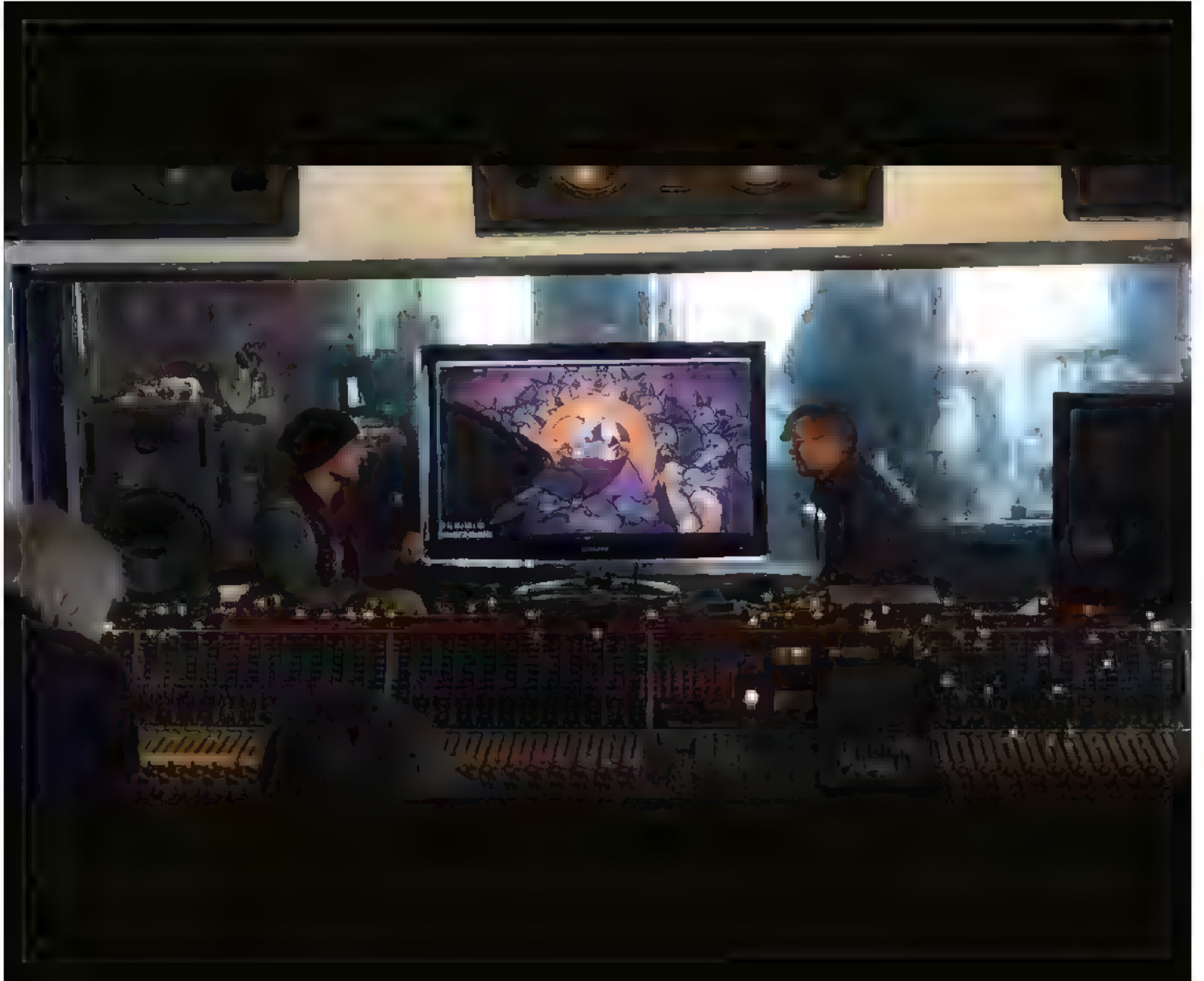
3 Tamm Moore shows a dramatic moment for Robyn, Melja, and Moll.

4 The relative sizes of Moll's two forms, drawn by Sandra Andersen and Federico Piravano.

5-6 These studies of Bill as a wolf emphasize the more geometrized design of his face. Artists: Federico Piravano.

7 These rough drawings suggest the manner Bill would express as a wolf. Artist: Alice Deutenius.

8 The relative sizes of Bill's two forms. Design by Sandra Andersen and Federico Piravano.



IV. Direction

The director of an animated feature must possess the tact of an ambassador, a minimalist's eye for detail, the endurance of a marathon runner, a general's ability to rally the troops, and the patience of Job. A director must also be able to envision the finished film while examining not only isolated scenes and sequences, but also individual paintings and drawings—much as a conductor hears the entire opera while discussing single notes with the performers.

When he began to develop *Wolfwalkers*, Tomm Moore was already an established director who had earned Oscar nominations and festival prizes for *The Secret of Kells* (2009) and *Song of the Sea* (2014). Ross Stewart had served as art director on *Kells* and contributed to the designs for *Song of the Sea* and *Laura's Part* (2012). The two men had shared the direction of Cartoon Saloon's sequence in *The Prophet* (2014), based on the poetry of Kathleen C. Brian. They wanted to continue working together.

In addition to being a director, Moore was a partner in Cartoon Saloon with Paul Young and Nora Twomey. They had built a studio where they could offer each other honest criticism without trying to impose their vision on each other's films.

"I've learned how to give notes not as a director but as an encourager. That's a different set of notes," Twomey explains. "We try to empower rather than criticize. That comes from years of working together and supporting each other through thick and thin. It's such an easy thing to give notes and feedback on somebody else's work. But if Tomm thinks something's working, I'm pretty sure it is."

"If you have directors who are confident and know they have the final say, they're more relaxed when they listen to all the feedback on an animatic," adds Young. "We do our films reasonably quickly. We might spend three to four years developing an idea. When the two-year production schedule begins, it's after the animatic has been worked on for almost a year and a half."

Wolfwalkers spent many months in development before Moore and Stewart felt it was ready to move into production.

"On *Song of the Sea*, we had an overall story, but there was a huge amount to work out," screenwriter Wil Collins did a lot of drafts," Moore says. "On *Wolfwalkers*, because it was me and Ross and Will, we had more meetings. Ross and I would do thumbnail sketches and figure out a sequence, talk to Will, then he'd work it into the script. There was a lot of back-and-forth, even after the first pass of storyboarding. Whenever we got heavy notes, Will got involved again."

Although most live-action features have a single director, many animated features have two or even three. There's simply too much work for one person to supervise it all. Some directing teams divide the film by sequence; others focus on the aspects of production they know best.

"When we started development and scriptwriting, it was only the two of us and Wil," Stewart recalls. "We had our own little room, and for a couple of years, we put up drawings that we liked and developed the idea that way. When it got into scene illustration and pre-production, Tomm naturally tended toward character design and I tended toward background design. We both supervised the storyboards."

"As production loomed, it became obvious that Tomm should focus on character and animation, and I would focus on background layout and line effects," he continues. "So most of my day was spent with layout and outline and colour backgrounds; most of Tomm's was spent with posing and character animation. Once some of those departments' work started to taper off, we both focused on effects and character animation."

Moore and Stewart could also delegate some duties to their assistant director, Mark Mullevy. "I worked as an animator with some other companies here in Ireland. When you start with really small companies, you end up doing a bit of everything," Mullevy



OPPOSITE Directors Ross Stewart and Tomm Moore at a recording session for the film. Photography: Jean Pierre Anquet

ABOVE A stylized drawing of a Wolfwalkers character. Artist: Shinné Harrington

explains. "When I came to Cartoon Saloon, I ended up being technical director on *Puffin Rock* and *The Breadwinner*. It feels natural to me to be the assistant director on *Wolfwalkers* because it essentially involves the same duties. I know how the sausage is made and how to make the calls."

"I always try to drive between Tomm and Ross and conciliate trouble of any kind," he continues. "Any problem that's cross-departmental, I handle. I think of myself as being a bit of connective tissue between the left and right hemispheres."

All three men worked closely with the editors. In recent years, editors have played a more significant role, helping the directors to shape the animated and, ultimately, the film.

"Two directors is a challenge, but it's also a blessing," says ed. to Richard Cody. "Having two directors allowed me a lot more freedom and a lot more of a voice. When the directors had different ideas about a sequence, I'd often be the deciding vote. But it also meant that certain decisions weren't as clear-cut. If there's one director in the room, he could have a positive response to something you show him. You work from that response, but the other director might have a negative response to the same material."

Pixar director Pete Docter observed that sometimes the reason a scene in an animated feature isn't working isn't the scene itself, but that it wasn't set up properly earlier in the film. Or that it *wasn't* getting the payoff it needed later in the film.

"On *Wolfwalkers* I was still very much finding my feet: what I was able to do and how much I could bring to the table," Cody concedes. "But toward the end of that process, there were certain board artists I would bring in and talk to about the sequence, and really hammer it out. I'd give my view on what I thought it needed, and they'd give theirs. Other board artists preferred to work in a more structured way where notes would come through the directors. It depends on the artist, on the team, and on the stage of the animation."

"I edited *Song of the Sea* and *The Breadwinner*. Ross and Tomm are good friends of mine," comments Darragh Byrne. "You can be honest and straightforward about what works and what doesn't. As an editor, you're picking out the best ideas and helping them mold the film. With Tomm and Ross, you can tell it like it is—and they can tell you what they don't like about the edits. I knew I could trust them to come up with great ideas."

"You assume a Cartoon Saloon film is going to look amazing because you see all the concept art: the incredible character designs and fantastic backgrounds," he adds. "But as editor, I stay focused on making sure the story is clearly told and the characters are

engaging. No matter how pretty it is, it still has to make people feel something."

"When you're in the city, you're in this pure geometric space; when you're in the forest, it's far more organic and beautiful compositions," agrees Mollery. "But you have a story to tell. There's a crossbow on the ground someone needs to see, so we need to call attention to it. We need a cutaway or a reverse shot and a close-up."

Some of the animation was done by artists at Studio 352 in Luxembourg and Foot Studio in Paris, who had worked on the previous Cartoon Saloon features. To ensure these artists felt they were genuinely part of the crew and not outsiders, the filmmakers invited the supervisors to spend time with them in Kilkenny before work began.

"Early in fall of 2018, we went to Kilkenny for two weeks just to be part of the crew for a little while, to talk with Tomm and Ross and Svend Rothmann Bonde, rough animation supervisor [and the other department heads]," says Nicolas Debray, animation supervisor at Studio 352. "A supervisor is usually just a communications person, who passes information from the crew to the director and from the director to the crew. But Tomm was really open to getting our ideas and seeing what we could bring to the animation. By checking his ego at the door, he gets the best from the artists who work for him, which is remarkable and rare."

"I went to Kilkenny for two weeks to meet everybody and see Cartoon Saloon's process," adds Foot Studio animation supervisor Jeanne-Sylvette Gaud. "The animation was just beginning on the first sequence. They had meetings with the animators to talk about the characters' psychology and evolution in each sequence."

Moore stresses that an animation director must always be patient—and tactful. Many animators like to describe their art form as "the Island of Mist: Toys" (a reference to the 1964 TV special *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*), but even self-proclaimed misfits have egos and sensitivities.

"You have to be patient and realize everyone hasn't been eating and drinking and breathing and sleeping the story quite as long as you have," he says. "You have to be ready to go back to the first references from three years ago and rediscover them with the crew. Show them what you're going for and why to get them on board. It's so easy to forget that for them, it's not as deeply ingrained as it is for you, the director."

The Cartoon Saloon artists were hard at work on *Wolfwalkers* in March 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic struck. On March 12, the Irish government closed schools and cancelled festivities, twelve days later, the order to shut down came.





"Ultimately, you have to have somebody who has the final vision, and Tomm and Ross do together. You can have writers, storyboarders, and editors. They'll give amazing feedback and help. But really it falls to the directors to see the film through."

PAUL YOUNG, PRODUCER

OPPOSITE PAGE Saloon's clearly disarrayed note captures the chaos of the studio during the lockdown.

ABOVE The staff of Cartoon Saloon as they work from home.

"When I went home on Sunday to take my computer home, I looked around the office and it felt like crying," Moore recalls. "I had taken going in to the office to work for granted—almost to the point of complaining about it. But I knew I was going to miss the camaraderie of the people I'd see every day."

"We were finishing up effects and still doing ink and paint and compositing," adds Stewart. "The effects and ink and paint crews could work from home easily enough. The big worry was compositing, because they're all working in Nuke. Their home computers don't have the licenses and wouldn't be able to handle the strain."

Fortunately, the film was nearing completion when the disease struck. "We benefited from the fact that we were so late in production," says Moore. "Luckily, we'd recorded the orchestra and the Irish folk band Kila weeks before the lockdown. I don't know how we would have worked around that."

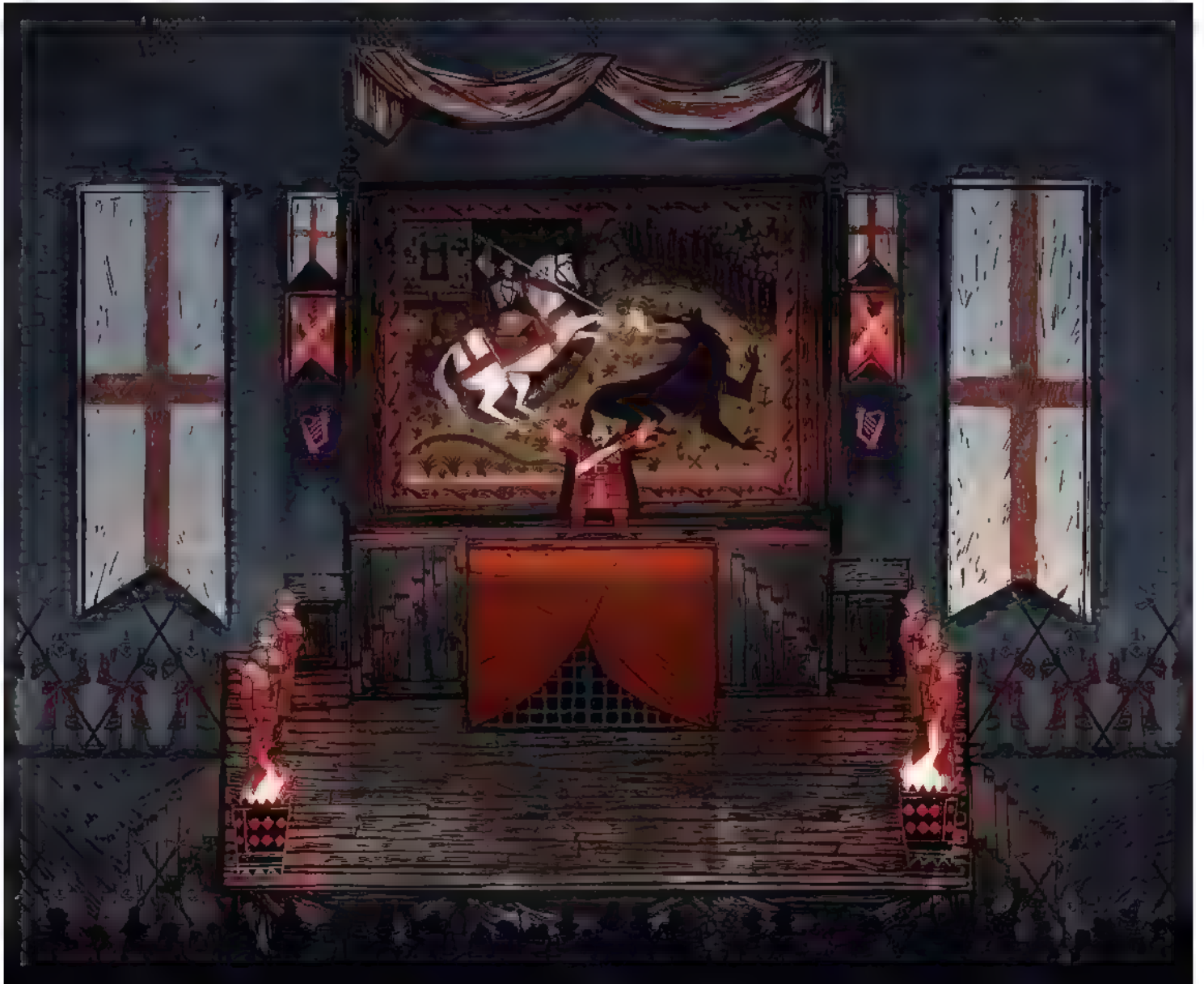
"If this had happened early in the production, when we were doing layout, rough animation, and posing, I wonder if we'd have been able to finish. Those stages require a lot more one-on-one," Stewart says. "We've adapted pretty well out of necessity. But it was really nice to be able to do a little drawing and explain directly to someone exactly what you wanted. Now everything has to be sent by Skype or e-mail, then we talk about it."

"You have to consider if you want to make any changes because it means another round of sending things back and forth," agrees Moore. "That quick and easy collaboration in the same room is what's missing. We extended the schedule by about six weeks to make up for the delays."

Cartoon Saloon has always been a friendly place with a vibrant esprit de corps. The filmmakers worry that spirit may change. Stewart says sadly, "When DIP finished, we couldn't even gather together have a few beers and pizza and say thank-you to the crew. We had to send an email, 'Thanks very much. We hope we'll see you for a premiere.'"

"We've had a lot of meetings about how this is going to change the studio," Moore says. "When we can open up again, we won't probably have a crew room or a shared coffee machine—places where you meet people you might not meet otherwise. We may keep doing show-and-tells, where people from different projects show a bit of their work on Zoom to maintain that connection between people."

"Our plan was to have everybody in one building by 2025," he concludes. "But even if they find a vaccine in the next year and everybody can come back, people may want to work from home more. Maybe that will be possible. It's going to change the culture of the studio."



v. Design

"In all 2-D animation, there is a tension between illustration and cinema. Tomm is an extremely illustrative storyteller, and that's brought to the fore in *Wolfwalkers*. But the characters exist in a space and the whole thing needs some kind of compositional harmony. There are nearly two thousand shots in this film: How do you keep everything harmonious from shot to shot? That's been the fun of this project."

MARK MJILLERY,
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

OPPOSITE The dark palette of red, grey, and black heightens the drama in this sketch of the red processor's bloodquarriers. Artists: Alice Drummond

Although 3-D computer animation has become the dominant form of studio animation, Cartoon Saloon has built an international reputation on its hand-drawn films. Its characters and settings reflect a wide range of influences from the films of LPA and Genndy Tartakovsky to Picasso and a host of artists and illustrators reaching back to the illuminators of the ninth-century Book of Kells.

Wolfwalkers producer Nora Twomey sums up the attitude at Cartoon Saloon when she says, "I trust drawers: people who use it as a method of communication. If you're in a meeting with Tomm, you have to be careful of your posture and what angle you're presenting, because he's going to be drawing you. Paul will be, too. In school we're taught if you're doodling, you're not paying attention, but people who draw as a method of understanding the world around them do it constantly. They're listening hard, but they're also doodling away, as Tomm and Paul do."

For the key role of production designer Moore and Stewart chose Spanish artist Maria Pareja. "I asked for an interview," she recalls. "Tomm asked if I wanted to do a test for *Wolfwalkers*. I did the test, and one week later, they said they wanted me here for scene illustration."

Moore replies, "I remember looking at her test with Ross. It looked great. In scene illustration, some people were more suited to the town side, which was much more structured and controlled: perfect squares and perfect lines. We needed someone to develop the forest into something much wilder and freer. Maria's style of drawing was naturally sketchy and loose, so it really fit the job."

Although Pareja speaks modestly of her efforts, Moore and Stewart are quick to praise her work. "She had a cartooniness in the way she drew," Moore says. "Some of the other scene illustrators would draw a forest, and the characters wouldn't fit in them as well as they would in Maria's. She uses these nice cartoony, simple shapes that Mebh would fit in. Maria ended up developing the forest style on her own after that."

"She drew the trees the same way she drew the characters, that's why it all fit together," agrees Stewart. "It didn't feel like a naturalistic sketch with a cartoon character punked on top of it. The whole world fit together."

The directors wanted the backgrounds to provide an effective stage for the characters, where they would look at home, but still stand out. Stewart compares the backgrounds to comic book panels: each setting is designed to fit the action in the scene. It shouldn't look like a previously existing background that the filmmakers dropped the characters into. Moore notes, "The characters are the main focus and everything has to support them."

"The forest is like another character. It has to match with Mebh and the other characters," says Pareja. "I think about composition and everything in the frame, but in a way that makes the character feel like part of the scene. If you're going to have leaves, you have to have leaves that match the character, so it's unified. It's like making a stage for the characters to perform on."

"I leave lots of space so the characters aren't drowned by details surrounding them," she continues. "The forest is always framing the characters in a nice way. But the trees are also flowing and have an energy. In some sequences, the forest is adapted to the action and the energy of the characters."

"I find it really exciting when I look at action sequences where the painting and artwork is really expressive," adds Stewart. "The lines become scratchy pencil marks. When things are calm, we let the paint bleed out to the edge—sometimes we even see a bit of the watercolour paper. It feels like the inner world of the characters is expressed in the backgrounds. The forest changes if the character is frightened or calm. Everything we do follows the characters: the effects, the magic, the water, the backgrounds, it all feels like one integrated image."

One important step in developing an animated feature is the colour script: a preliminary series of images that suggests the feelings in each sequence. The images may be simple lines or patches of colour—a gentle blue for a calm sequence, stark red and black for a dramatic moment. Or they may be paintings that suggest the composition of the scenes. The look of the colour script varies according to the directors' wishes and the artists' approach, but its function remains the same: to provide an overview of how the story will develop in purely visual terms.

The colour script for *Wulfwalkers*, which required about seventy individual paintings, was created by Alice Diendonckx, who says, "The colour script is a narrative map of the movie that includes everything you can't say in words, so you have to say it with colour. You can translate a feeling into words, you can translate it into music, you can translate it into colours. The colour script expresses the emotional lines and the narrative arc of the movie."

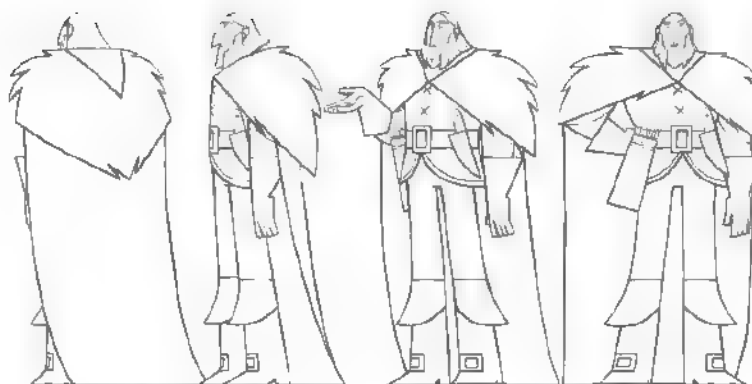
"I'd be given scenes like an animator who's given a key moment, then I'd work out the transitions between them—the contours. 'There are lows and highs.' The emotions form a wave that people have to recognize from the colour script. But you can't work on different sequences separately. You have to work on them all together. It's one colour in relation to another, putting all the information in the colours."

"We talk a lot about the colours because *Kells* was really green, *Song of the Sea* was blue. They have dominant colours," Stewart adds. "We wanted this film to have an autumn orange-ness to it."

The Cartoon Saloon features revel in their two-dimensionality. But the character designs have to be more than an sophisticated combinations of lines and shapes. The animators have to be able to move them in ways that convey not only physical motions, but personality and emotions as well.

"I looked at the previous Cartoon Saloon films, but I also looked at the work of Studio Ghibli," says character designer Federico Provano. "The wolf in *Princess Mononoke* may not have been appealing, but she was very expressive, which I found interesting. Even if I wasn't using that design style, I saw it was cool to push the character designs."

"A lot of people think it's all about the graphic shapes, and make the characters very flat and cutout-y. You need to think both three-dimensionally and graphically at the same time," notes Sara van Ameringen, who also contributed character designs. "It's about finding the strong poses, the dramatic poses, but also choosing the strongest graphics."



At the beginning of any production, the designers make hundreds of rough drawings as they explore different ideas for the characters. Some designs look too strange, too familiar, too bland, too unappealing. The artists draw and redraw. At the end of the day, the floor of the studio may be so littered with crumpled paper, it looks like snow fell.

"At the beginning, I was trying to push the designs in very weird ways," Provano recalls. "Bill's nose was much bigger, we wouldn't have been able to turn him. Since Moll is a princess, I tried making her a towering troll, taller than Bill, with sharp teeth and an attitude."

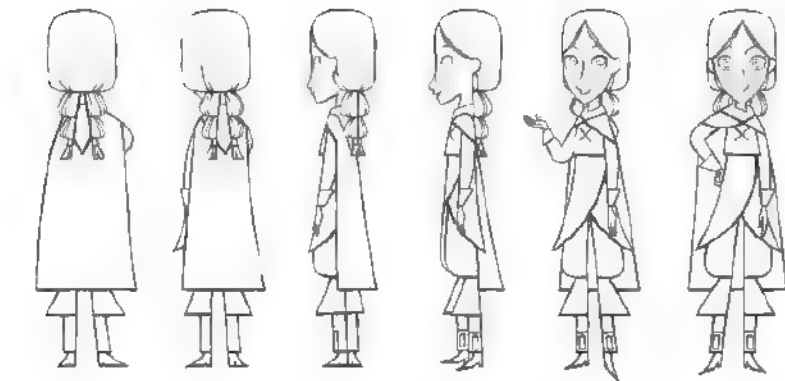
"Tommy is super open and super easy to talk with," he continues. "I would draw sheets of different possibilities for a character in rough pencil. Tommy would select the things he liked, and point out ones he didn't. He'd take my drawings and do little draw-overs explaining what he wanted. I'd rework the character following those guidelines."

Much of the development work was done on paper, as Moore and Stewart wanted to preserve the look of the artists' sketches. The drawings were later scanned into a computer for final adjustments. It's faster and easier to use Photoshop to alter the size of the nose on an otherwise successful design than to make the artist redraw the same image repeatedly.

During the development process, the artists will do turnarounds: views of the character from different angles to ensure

"The look of the studio's films is very much about the designs. You need to make sure the animation works in the scene and looks believable, but still fits this flat aesthetic. Sometimes a curve looks nicer than the actual form of a paw. There are choices to make, but part of that process is allowing the animators and clean-up artists to have input in those choices."

NEETHAITCHAILES
FINAL LINE DESIGNER



"We want to keep what looks best. For the wolves, instead of turning the designs around all the time, we pushed for certain angles that looked the best. Same for the human characters. You may use an awkward angle for the mood of the shot, but for the key poses, we always go for what looks nice and graphic."

SANDRA ANDERSEN
LEAD POSING ARTIST

THIS SPREAD The turnaround shows the characters from various angles, helping the animators to draw them consistently. The red patches on their chests indicate where a polished colour will be applied to keep their faces from looking too mask-like. Design by Sandra Andersen; layout by Elizabeth W. Smith

the design works from every vantage point. The character designs must also have an underlying structure so that multiple artists can draw them. It's easier to keep a character consistent-looking if the animators know her head is basically a sphere and the bottoms of her eyes touch the equator, rather than trying to approximate the shapes freehand.

"As a designer and a guy, I find cute little girls difficult to draw, ended up doing the least work on Robyn," says Pirovano. "They liked my design for the generic wolves from the beginning, and it just evolved. On Bill, I changed the design of his nose, then Sandra took it over. She's amazing at making a character turn and do all the things an animator needs it to do."

"I didn't work much on the concepts. I was finalizing the designs for the animators—looking at turnarounds and the construction of the characters so people could draw them," Andersen replies. "We have to be able to turn them around; otherwise, the animation will all be flat and from the side. When I get a rough design, I try to stay true to it. But I break the design down into simple shapes you can track. For example, I divided Robyn's leg into halves. The halfway mark is the knee, where the pants stop. It's just a way to give some rules to drawing the characters to keep them consistent."

Witcha adds, "I was tasked with designing the final line of all the characters for the clean-up department to follow. The

characters are tricky. There's not a lot of landmarks on their faces for the animator to register to make sure they stay on model. So it was really important to get the model sheets as tight and definitive as possible."

Kilkenny had to be a bustling town, filled with people going about their everyday tasks and watching the story unfold. Designing the many individuals who make up the crowds fell to Pirovano.

"For the townsfolk, I did a bunch of sketches that they liked, because they had a lot of personality. I was treating them as real characters," he says. "I hate to see animated movies where the crowds are the worst designs. Sometimes, there are awful designs used behind the main characters, instead of using the opportunity to make the world richer."

One hallmark of the Cartoon Saloon features is the way the characters work not only as individual figures on the screen, but also as parts of larger patterns when they're grouped together. In the opening of *The Secret of Kells*, the monks who watch Brendan chasing a goose stand as single characters—and as elements in complex graphic designs.

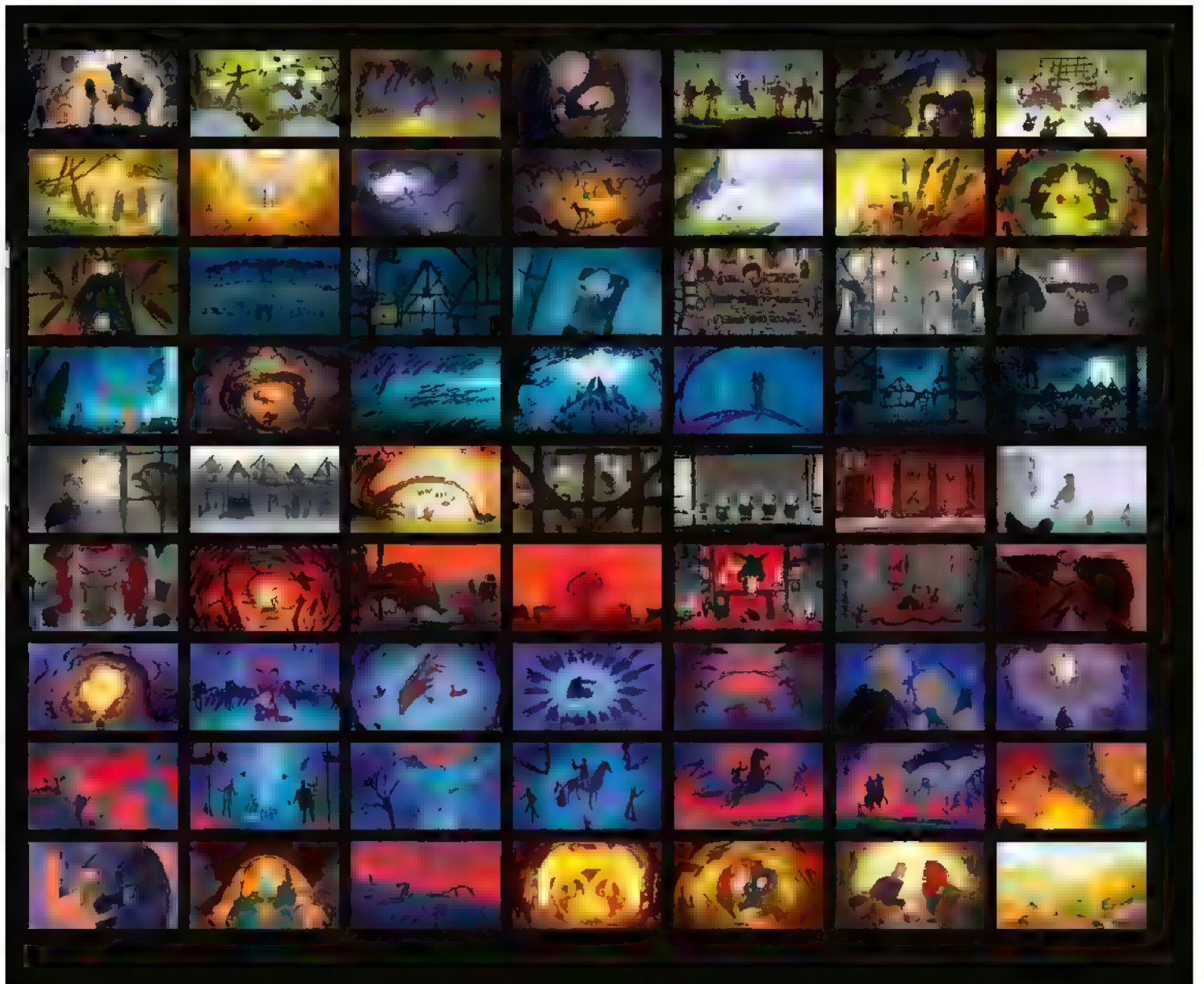
"Because they're in the middle, the townsfolk share some elements of the main characters and the backgrounds," Pirovano explains. "We have them connect with each other in ways that recall an old stained-glass window, with lines between the pieces of glass. When you look at it, it doesn't necessarily feel like everything is separated, but like a composition of interesting shapes that fit together like a puzzle."

Pirovano's crowd designs include caricatures of many of the Cartoon Saloon artists. The figures had to be interesting, but not so interesting they drew the viewer's attention away from the main characters.

"Sometimes we had one or two characters pop out too much and we had to remove them," Pirovano recalls. "My process is less about 'How do I make their design less interesting?' than 'How do I make their attitude less interesting?' You can have a very uninteresting design, but if the character is waving his hands, it will be noticeable. You can make interesting characters, but in ways that blend with the backgrounds."

Wolfwalkers is the first project that Pirovano has directed that had so many characters," says Moore. "We've got crowds of people. I never realized how much preparation that takes. I think I'll go back to making movies with just two characters on the screen at a time. Two characters in the Arctic."







OLD KILKENNY

Often referred to as "The Marble City" for its black limestone buildings, Kilkenny began as an ecclesiastical foundation in the early sixth century of the Common Era. The name Kilkenny comes from *Cill Charainnigh*, "Cell (or Church) of Cairnech (or Canice)." After the Norman invasion of Ireland in the twelfth century, Richard Strongbow built a wooden fortress near the site of modern Kilkenny Castle. In 1609, James I of England granted Kilkenny a royal charter conferring the status of city.

In 1641, during the growing conflict between the king and Parliament in England, a group of Catholics of English and Irish extraction established the Confederation of Kilkenny to defend their faith, rights, and liberties. Oliver Cromwell attacked Kilkenny in March 1650. Although he did not enter the city due to an outbreak of plague, his troops wreaked extensive damage. The attack was followed by a large-scale confiscation of property.

Moore and Stewart set *Wolfwalkers* in Kilkenny at the time of Cromwell, but they were more interested in creating an effective setting for their fantasy than in a scrupulous depiction of seventeenth-century life. Suswan notes, "There are certain things some historians will be up in arms about. But we hope they'll accept the fantasy over a factual approach."

"There's a bit of poetic license in the visuals, but we take inspiration because we grew up here in Kilkenny, surrounded by all this beautiful medieval architecture," adds Moore. "Every day, you're reminded of the past. We've created a fantasy Kilkenny that helps the story."

To create a believable fantasy, the artists studied the original in detail. Monuments in the city range from St. Canice's Cathedral, which dates from the thirteenth century to the Rothe House, built by a wealthy merchant family in 1594. Scattered throughout the city are old stairs, chimneys, doorways, walls, and lanes. Although they came from many countries—Brazil, France, Italy, Iceland, Chile—the artists quickly developed an affection for Kilkenny.

Production designer Maria Pareja recalls, "Clara Avedillo, who was a scene illustrator, would sketch the chimneys she saw looking out the studio windows. She kept saying, 'I want to draw more chimneys! You have all this reference really close!'"

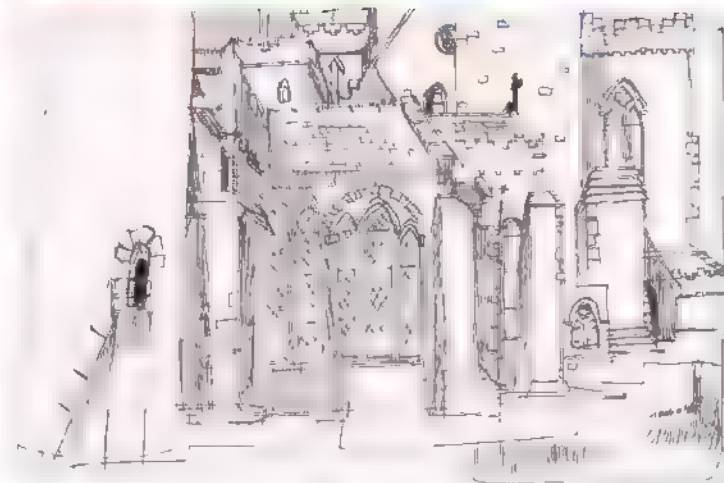
"Kilkenny is a city that preserves its history well, and being immersed in the city helped us get the right feeling into the backgrounds," agrees



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background final line supervisor Eduardo Damasceno. "Seeing the structures and the kind of materials they used gives you an understanding of how people lived then. When you can bring the feeling of being in a place into a drawing, it makes the art come alive."

Colour background supervisor Stefano Scapioni adds, "It's more about getting Ireland. Ireland has a unique colour palette that's even visible in the center of town."

1-2. Geoff King sketching one of the many historic buildings in Kilkenny

3. A page from Friedrich Schöpper's sketchbook of Kilkenny

OPPOSITE Photos of historic buildings in Kilkenny by Patricia Camerone, with notes and drawings



"On the north stands boldly forth the large and magnificent cathedral, church sacred to St. Canice, the abbot; southwards, and verging towards the east, rises the castle, or rather a fortress guarded by many castles and bulwarks. From this twofold source sprang the civic community..."

DESCRIPTION OF KILKENNY FROM
A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE DUCES OF ASSOCI
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The Kilkenny in the film had to feel like a vibrant community where people went about their daily lives, despite the presence of wolves in the forests and occupying troops in the city.

"When you're drawing an old building, it has to feel lived-in. It has to have some kind of history. The paint should be slightly chipped just to show it's not brand-new from a box. That helps ground the characters' layout," supervisor Len Weiss explains. "When you're designing the streets, buildings, and walls, it's interesting to think about, say, the organization of a market then. What kind of goods could you buy? Were there robberies on the ground? Did you have straw underfoot to suck up moisture? It all helps to create a more believable image."

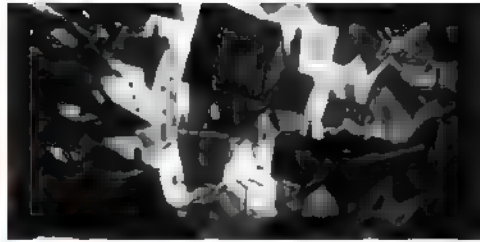
Many of the artists went on sketching trips in the city and took photographs. Details of the architecture and the way light played on the stone structures became fixed in their minds.

"It's interesting to see what details people pay attention to," Weiss continues. "Someone might add a little alcove in a wall where people used to put their candles. That tiny design element gives a bit more dimension to a wall that could have just been plain stone and boring."

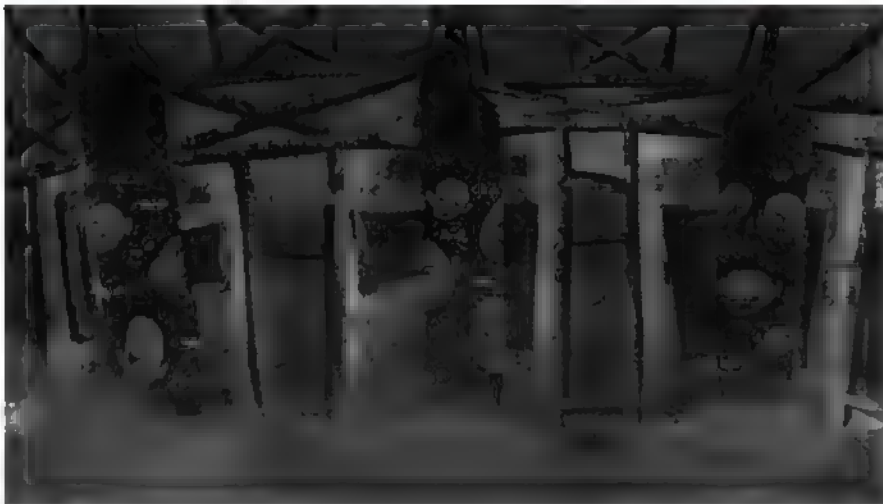
Producer Nora Twomey sums up the artists' affection for the city when she concludes, "Kilkenny is a beautiful place, and our history is just underneath our feet. At the Medieval Milk Museum, they tell us something like sixty thousand people are buried under parts of High Street, generations of people who struggled to make a life here. It's incredibly poignant, and you feel it in the streets. You feel connected to history. You're a continuation of something rather than an end or a beginning."



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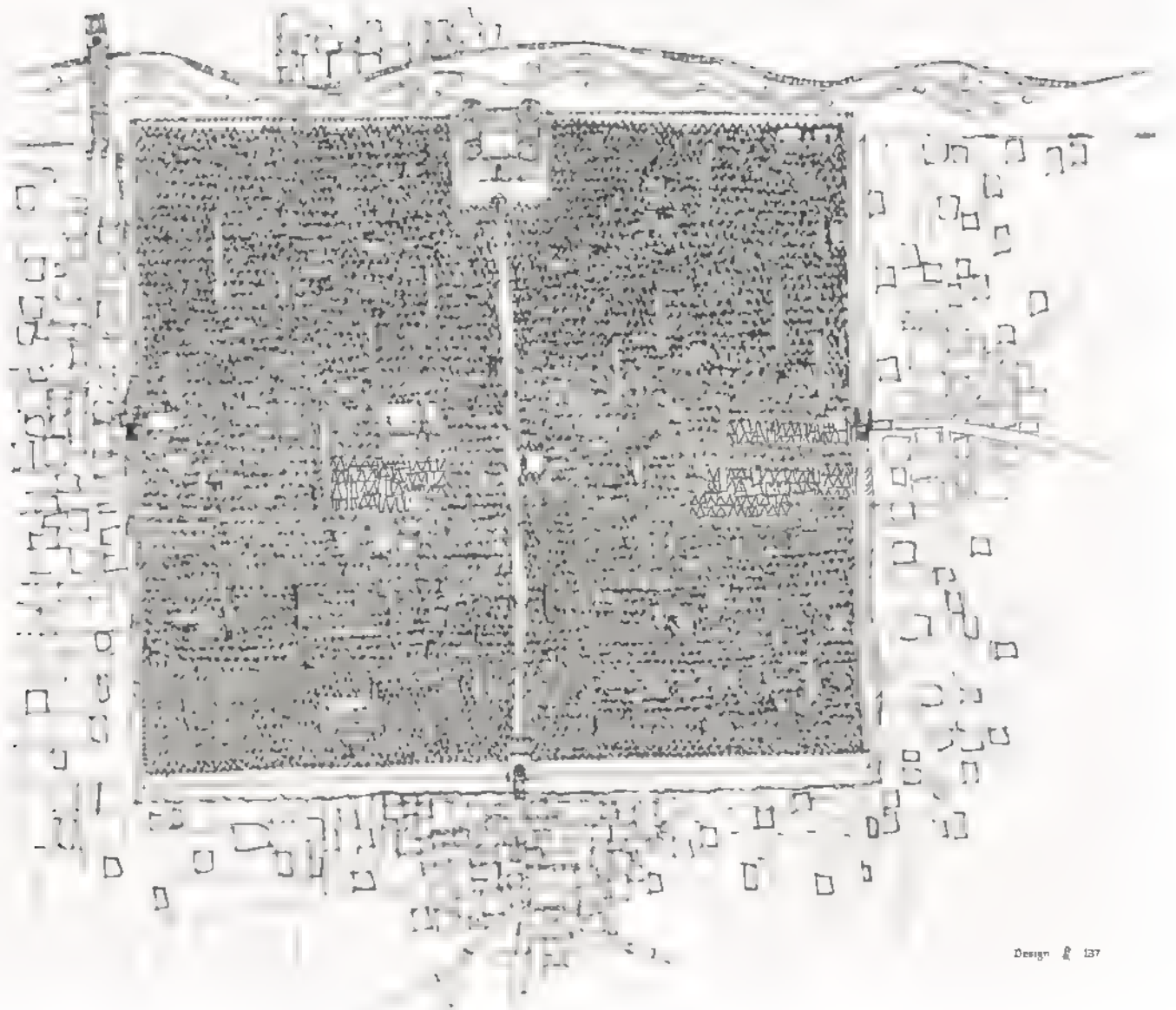


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1-2 First Cowan's studies suggest how the wolves might view Killenny.

3-4 Two views of town from the wolves point of view. Artists: Friedrich Schaper and Tamas Macre.

OPPOSITE: A rough map of Killenny and its environs for the artist's reference. Artist: Ross Stewart.





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1. Set up a scene with a variety of
of objects and a few people.

2. Then, add a few more objects
and people to the scene.

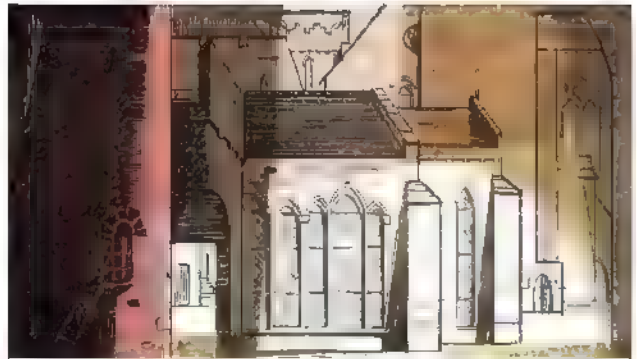
3. Add a few more objects and
people to the scene.

OPPOSITE Drawing a scene
with a few objects and people
is a good way to start.





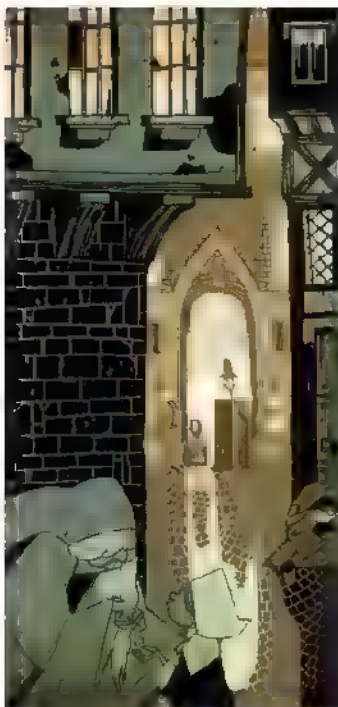
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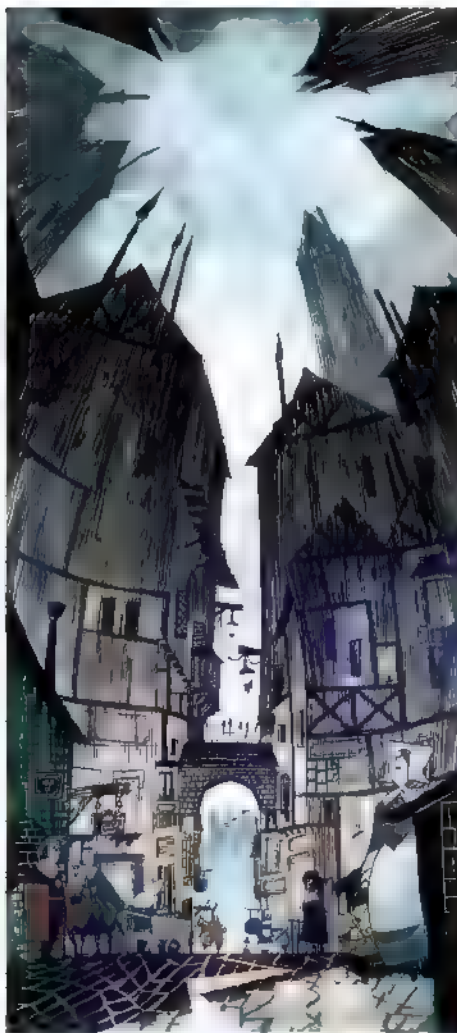
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3. A narrow alleyway in a medieval town, illuminated by a warm light from a small doorway in the distance. The walls are made of dark stone, and the scene is framed by the dark silhouettes of buildings on either side.

4. A narrow alleyway in a medieval town, illuminated by a warm light from a small doorway in the distance. The walls are made of dark stone, and the scene is framed by the dark silhouettes of buildings on either side.

5. A narrow alleyway in a medieval town, illuminated by a warm light from a small doorway in the distance. The walls are made of dark stone, and the scene is framed by the dark silhouettes of buildings on either side.

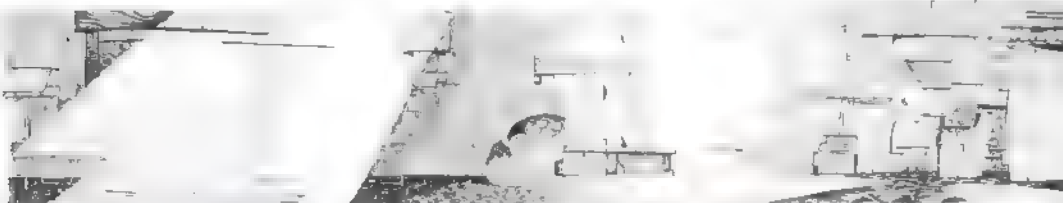
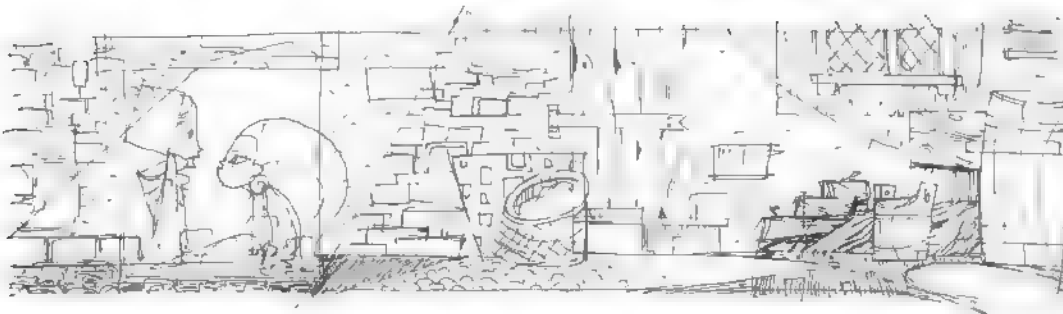
6. A narrow alleyway in a medieval town, illuminated by a warm light from a small doorway in the distance. The walls are made of dark stone, and the scene is framed by the dark silhouettes of buildings on either side.



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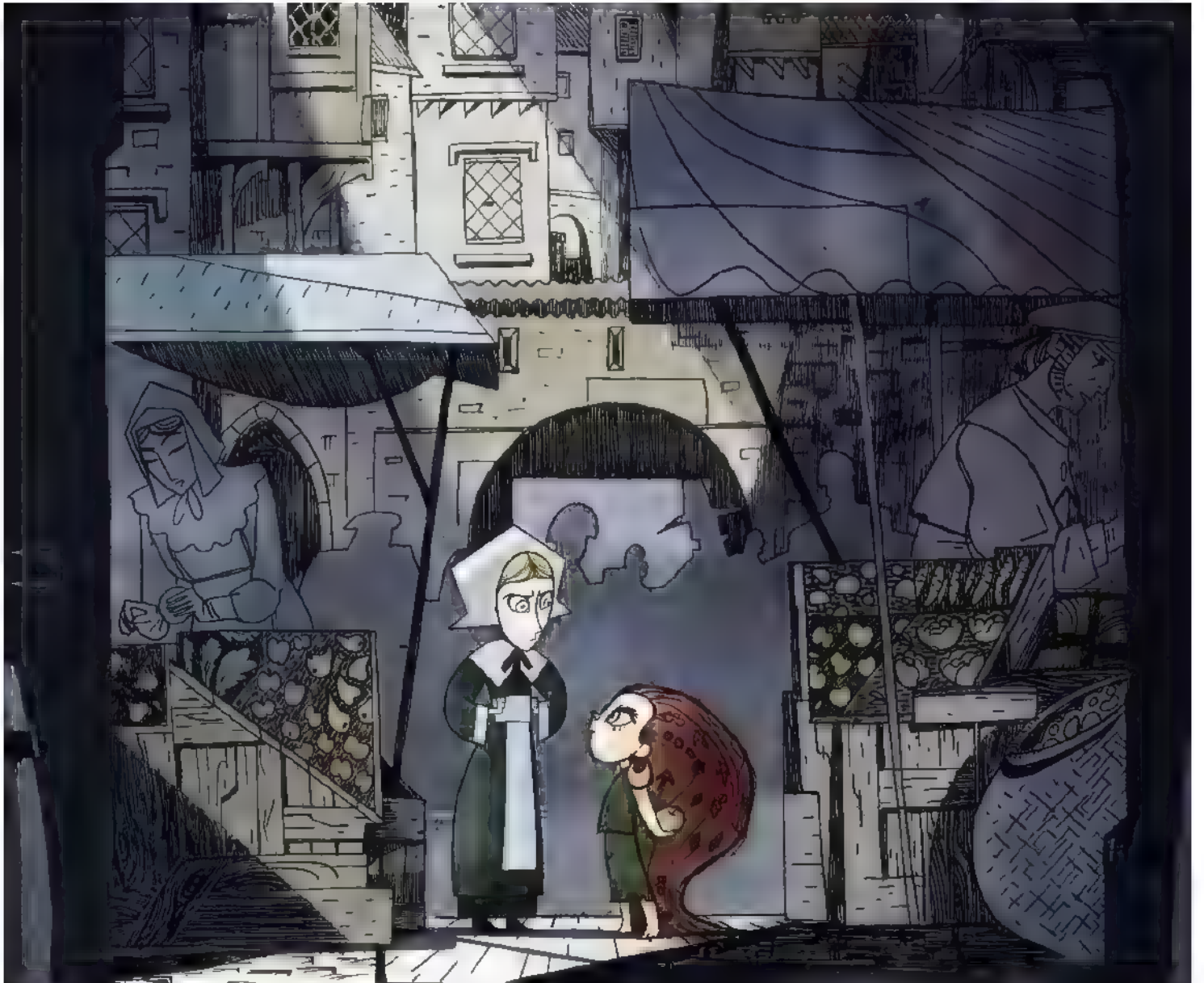


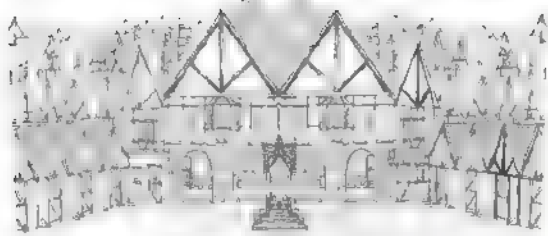
LEFT

Front elevation of the building
 Right elevation of the building
 Section view of the building
 Plan view of the building

OPPOSITE

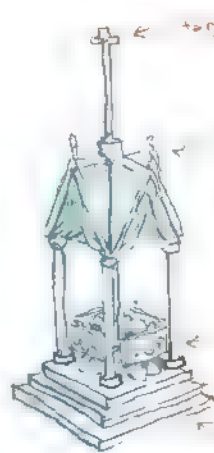
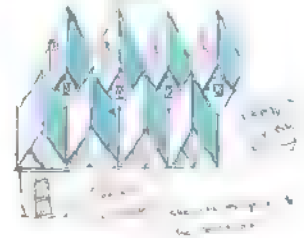
Back elevation of the building
 Section view of the building
 Plan view of the building





Keeps close view
of the forest.

→ forest



← target practice for soldiers!

Market Cross

Arrows on each side

four axes with animals
on top of each

Steps - where people
gambled + drank and the kids
sneak on folk

THIS PAGE 17-19 20-21
buildings and streets near the center
of the town, 17-19 20-21 22-23

OPPOSITE TOP The marketplace in
Kilkenny, line by Clara Amadio and
Edoardo Damieneo, colour by Edoardo
Damieneo and Stefano Scapellato

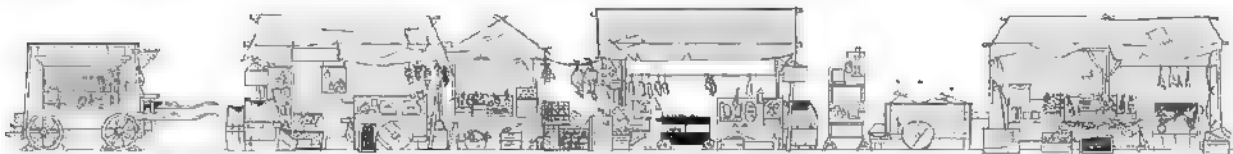
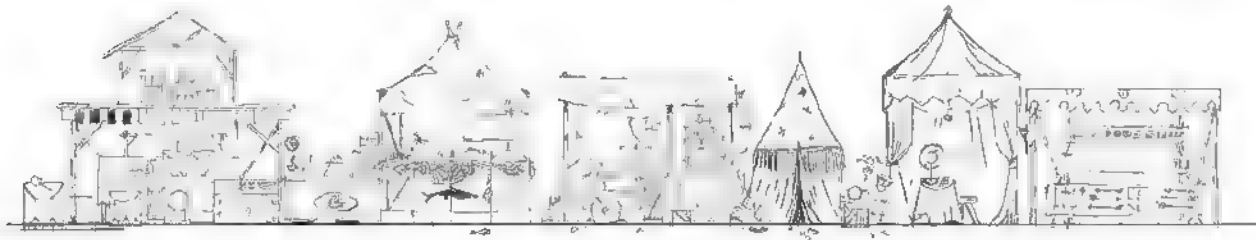
OPPOSITE BOTTOM 24-25
details for signs and objects in and
around the Kilkenny market, Artist
Antonio Calabrese

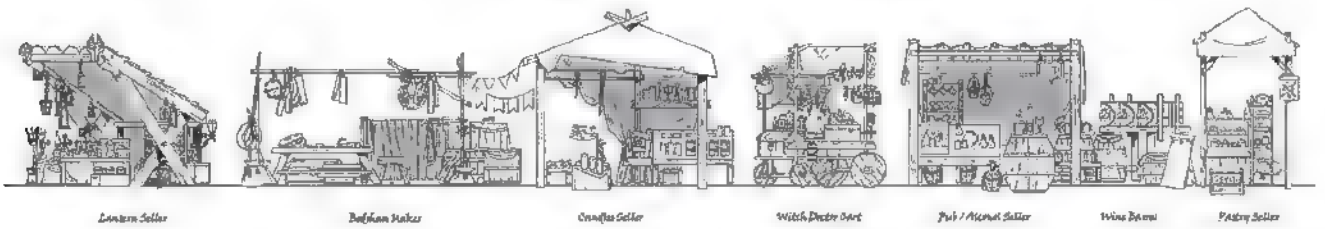
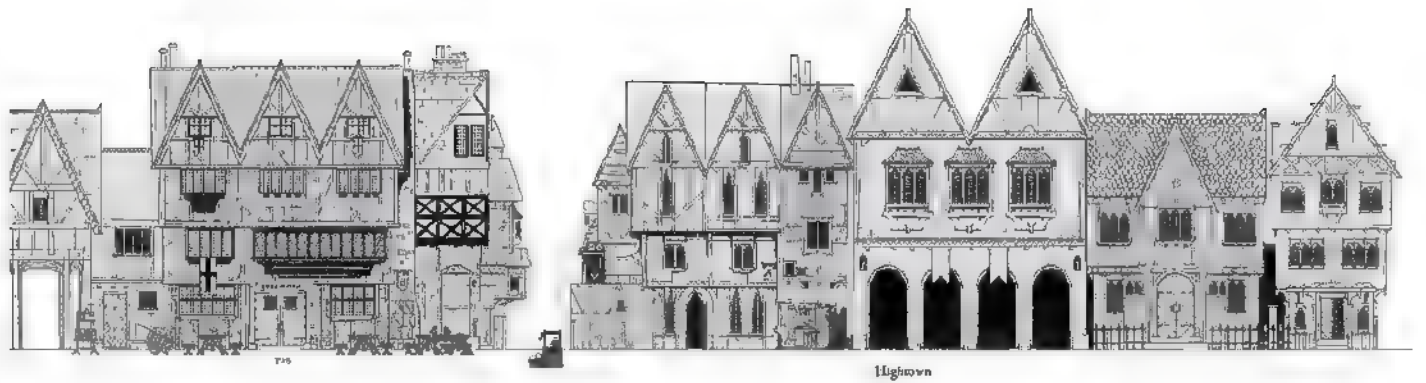
"You can't necessarily use everything
around you, but when you've seen real
things, you don't have to invent them.
It's the tiny ideas and tweaks the
artists add that turn something plain
into something that has some history
to it, something that feels true."

LEO WEISS LAYOUT SUPERVISOR

TOP ROW Antonio Gaudí's detailed architectural drawings reflect the different economic levels of the modest St. John's Suburb, the more prosperous Irish town, and the wealthy High Town.

MIDDLE AND BOTTOM ROWS Gaudí's drawings of the stalls and tents for the overhauled and jammed-in the marketplace. Artist: MAAST (anaglyph)



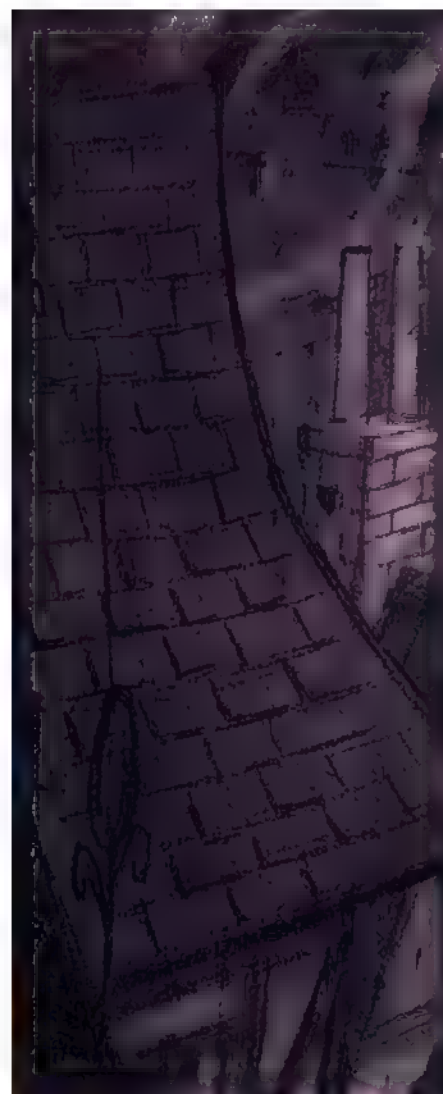


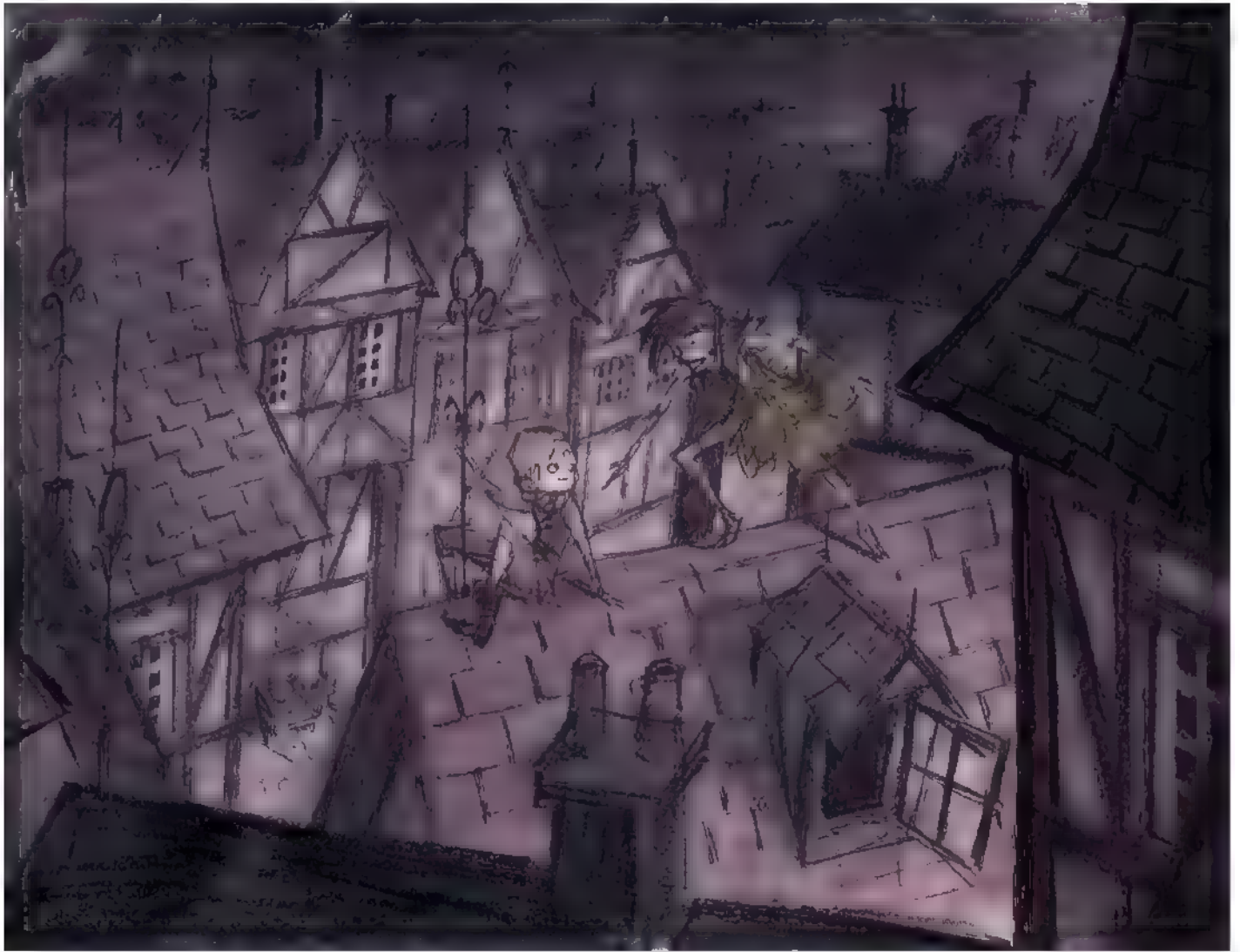


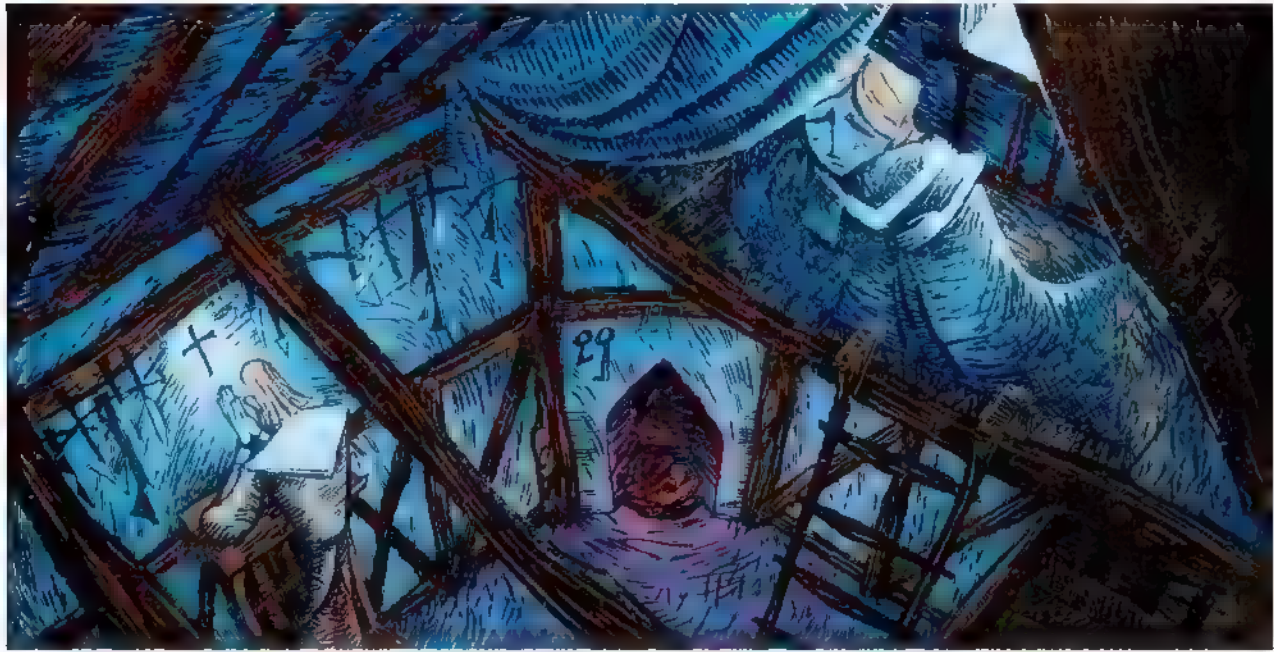
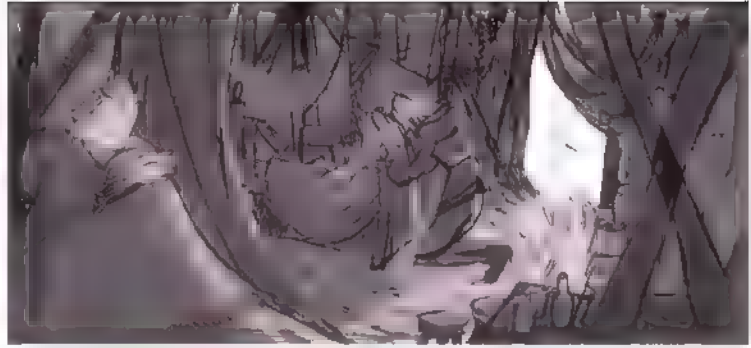
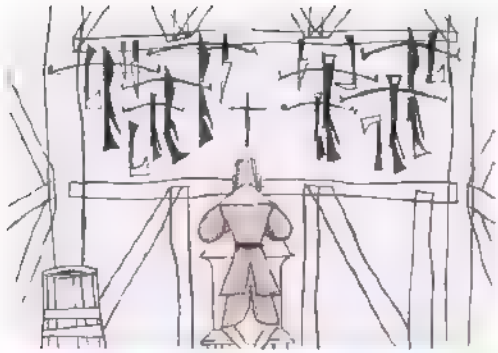
TOP The fanciest-looking buildings loom over the residents of Kiltarnay as they awaken. Artist: Frederick Schaeper

ABOVE The wolf spirit returns to Ruby's body in Clint Amadillo's moated scene

RIGHT A clandestine meeting between Ruby and Melb echoes Peter Pan. Artist: Cyril Pedrosa









4

OPPOSITE Seventeenth-century buildings
were neither comfortable nor private

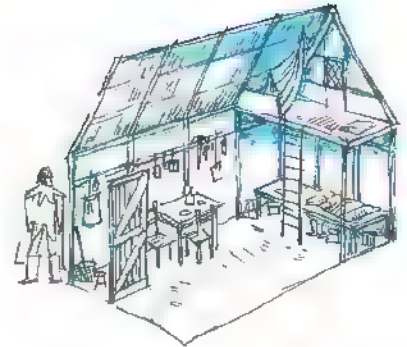
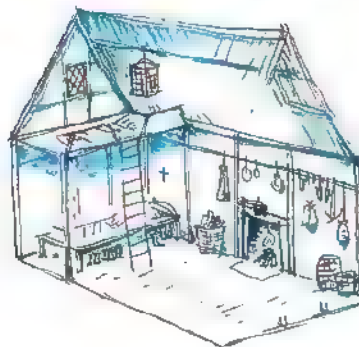
1 *Alas, Stewart imagines hell at prayer and of
the rogues and crosses in his home*

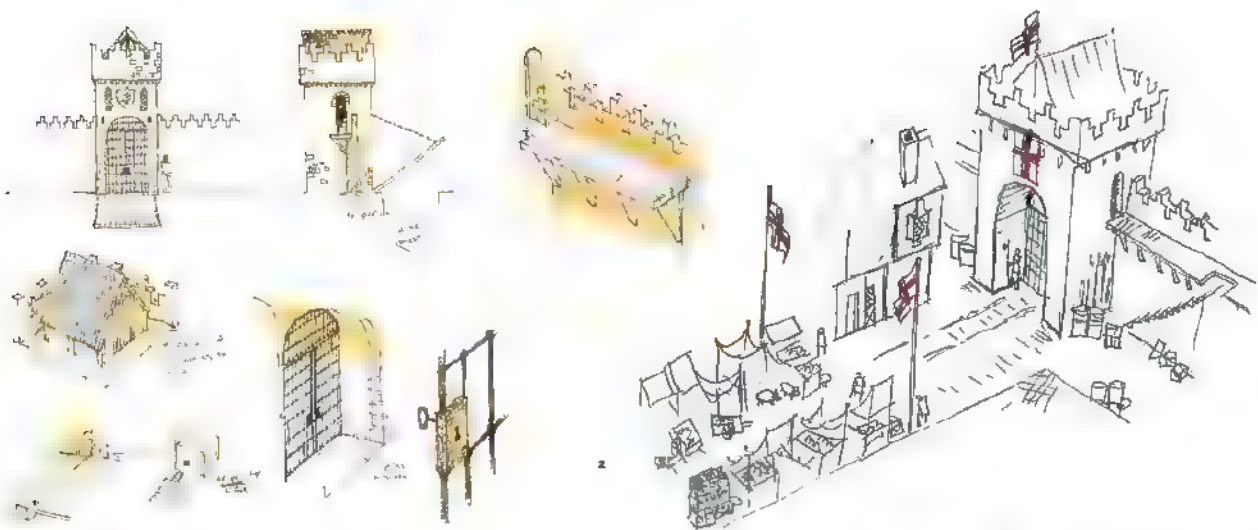
2 *Robin watches Artie, Ross Stewart*

3 *Robin looks down from her precarious bed
Artie, Ross Stewart*

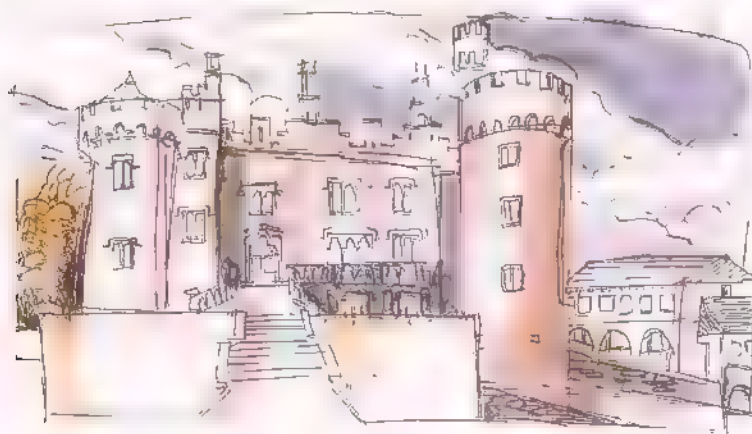
4 *Robin tries to restrain a furious bill
Artie, Friedrich Schupke*

5 *A drawing of William Robin's home
Artie, Ross Stewart*





1



3



4

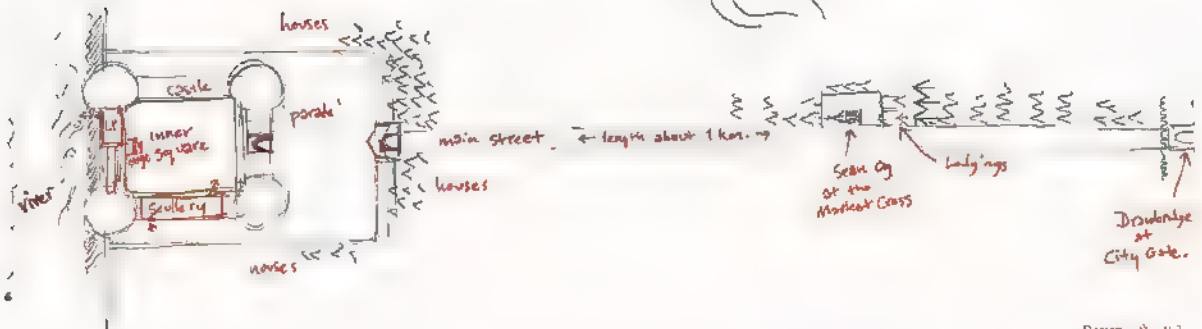
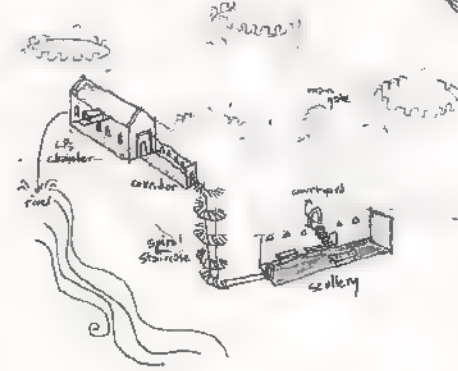
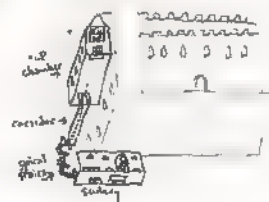
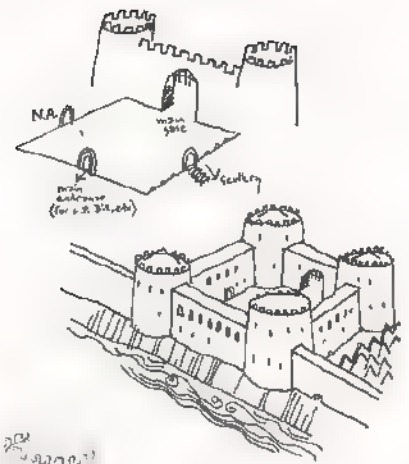
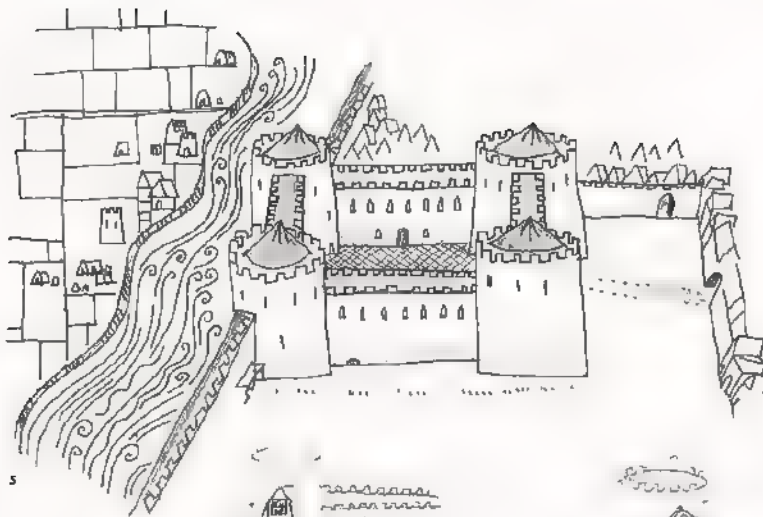
Kilsenny was a small city in the seventeenth century.

1-2 Architectural details of town fortifications inspired by the castle. Artist: Ross Stewart

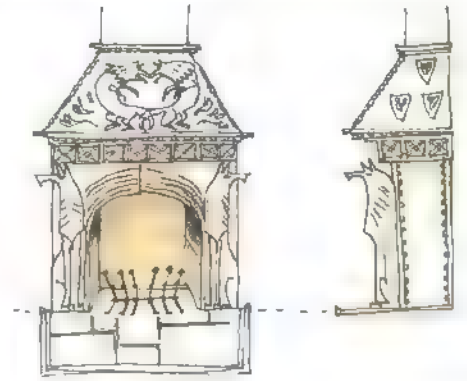
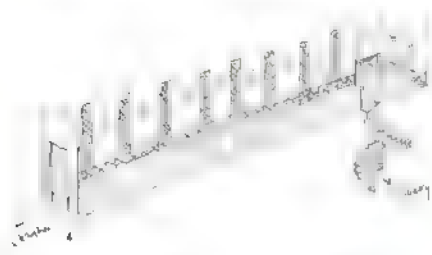
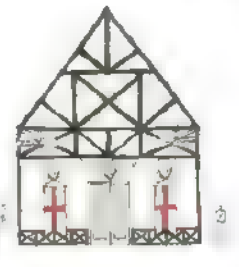
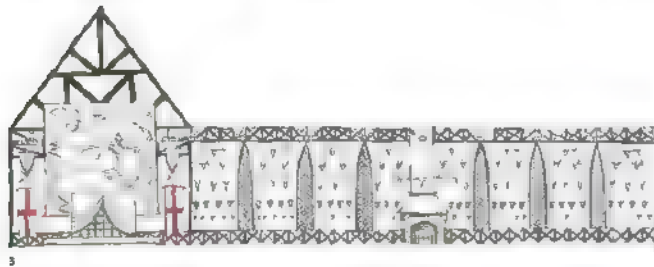
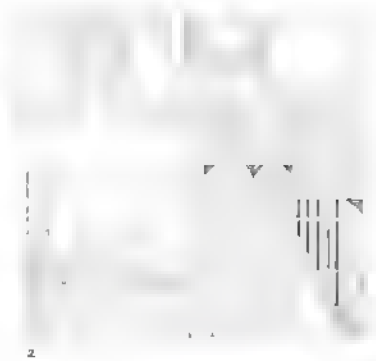
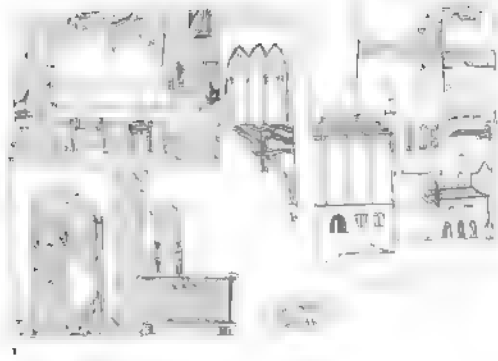
3 A sketch of an imagined older version of the castle. Artist: Friedrich Schaper

4 A photograph of Kilsenny Castle.

5-6 These simple but clear sketches explore the relationship between the castle and location. Artist: Ross Stewart

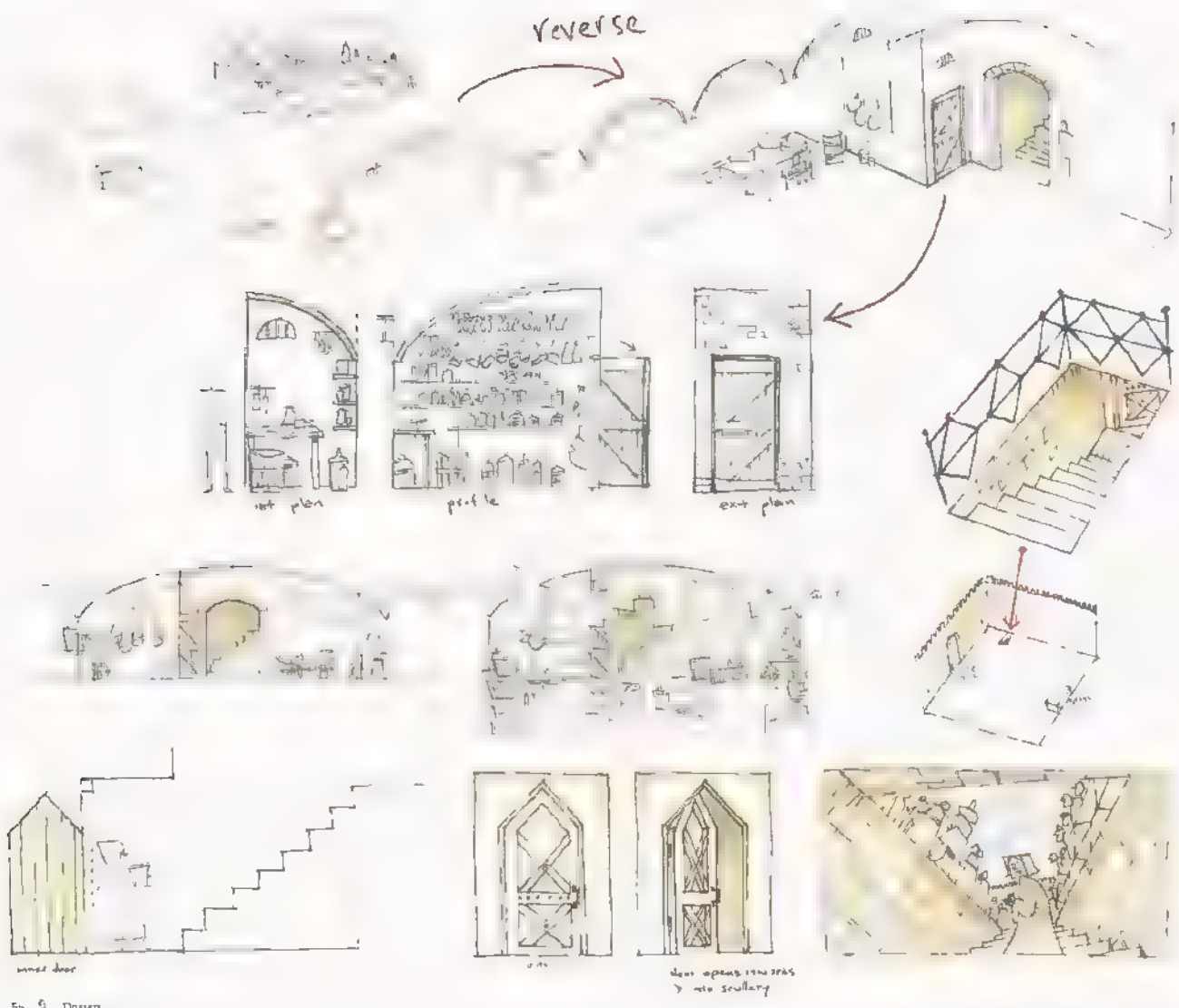






OPPOSITE The main door of the church is a simple, rectangular opening with a small, arched window above it. The door is made of wood and is decorated with a simple, geometric pattern. The window is also made of wood and is decorated with a simple, geometric pattern.

1-2 The main door of the church is a simple, rectangular opening with a small, arched window above it. The door is made of wood and is decorated with a simple, geometric pattern. The window is also made of wood and is decorated with a simple, geometric pattern.





1

OPPOSITE Turn of a century
 ————
 ————
 John Rice Sullivan

1. The interior space of the Pizzeria
 ————
 ————
 John Rice Sullivan

2. 3. The interior space of the Pizzeria
 ————
 ————
 John Rice Sullivan



2



3

TOWN LINE VS. FOREST LINE

Wolfwalkers focuses on the conflict between individuals who seek to dominate nature and people who want to live in harmony with it. The former see themselves as masters of a land they've subdued, whereas the latter share a place in the natural world. That conflict is embodied visually in the division between the rectilinear buildings of Killenny and the sensually curving vegetation in the forest, a division that extends to the lines used to draw them.

"We have two different worlds," says animation FX supervisor Andreu Campos. "The world inside the city, where everything is square and straight, with very sharp lines. In the forest, things are wild and rounded. Even the characters in town have more geometric lines, while the characters in the forest are rounded and soft and warm."

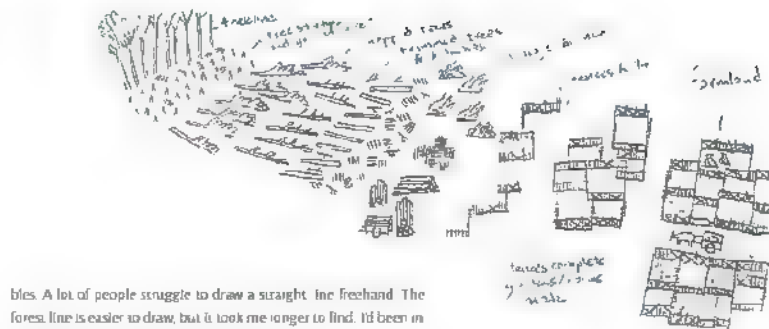
In the early '90s, Disney artist JBwerks modified a photocopy machine to transfer the animators' drawings onto sheets of clear acetate called "cels," in lines of black powder. The powder never adhered perfectly, giving the lines a friable quality noticeable in *101 Dalmatians*. The Cartoon Saloon artists used that look as a jumping-off point for the slightly imperfect "town line" which suggested a wood-block print.

"To show the point of view of the Puritans, we went for the wood block because it seems stiff and more upright. We see their world in all squares and boxes, and everything's ordered, compared to the forest, where everything is organic," explains Moore. "The idea was to show the forest and all the wild things as expressively as possible. We went for loose brushstrokes and scratchy pencil lines, with lots of texture and rendering on the wolves. They feel like sketches."

Clean-up animation supervisor John Walsh adds, "The forest line replicates how a rough animation drawing looks. That lovely energetic line is exactly what Tomm and Ross were looking for."

Layout supervisor Leo Weiss comments, "The town has a strong visual identity: It's square, woodcut-like patterns. The forest is organic, ever chaotic. It also has strong rules, no straight lines, lots of curves. In the middle, we've got farmland that runs from the town to the forest, so it gets more structured or more open as you get closer to one edge or the other."

Working on the film required the artists to draw in two distinct styles. "I find the town line easier, because I come from a background of doing clean-up," says final line designer Beth Wirthalls. "I'm used to the tight control, so I'm able to draw a straight line without wob-



bles. A lot of people struggle to draw a straight line freehand. The forest line is easier to draw, but it took me longer to find. I'd been in this rigid clean-up mindset for a while."

The disjunctive look of the lines extends to the characters. Robyn Bly, the Lord Protector, and the townspeople are drawn in the wood-block style, whereas Mebh, Mai, and the wolves are rendered in the forest style. "All the artists are working with characters in both line styles," says clean-up animation lead Tatiana Mazzei. "Some people are more comfortable with one line than the other, so we try to give them more of those shots. But, hey, we're still going to get both."

"We have rules that dictate where a line should break, where it should be thicker, where it should be thinner. After a while, it's programmed in your head," she continues. "But if you get a forest line shot after working with the town line for three weeks, it may take a couple of hours to get back into it."

Despite the challenges, the artists take obvious pride in how even the individual lines support the film's story.

Eduardo Damasceno, background final line supervisor, says, "It's nice to see how everything builds on the geometric town and the organic forest. In the city, we keep the lines constrained and use ink to create cleaner lines. But we can't be super clean. That's why we go for the woodcut effect. For the forest, we use thick pencils and even charcoal to vary the lines as much as possible, to give them a wild feeling."

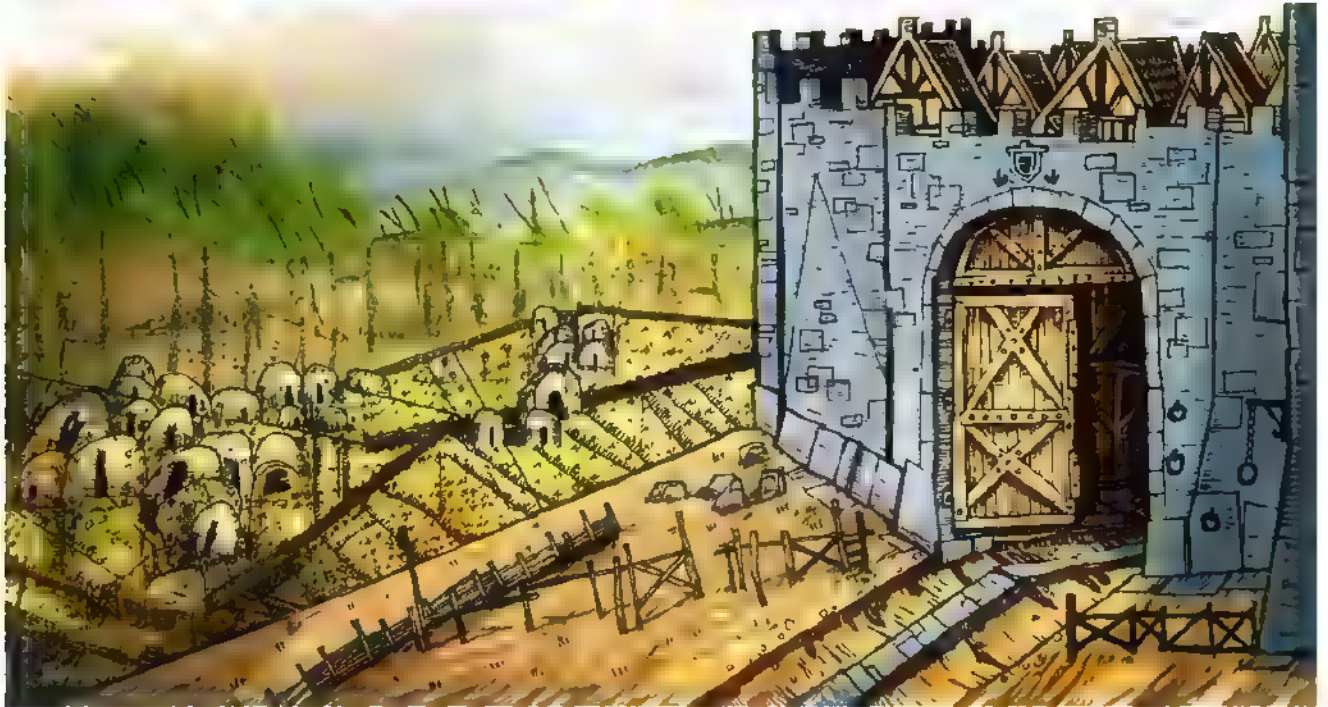
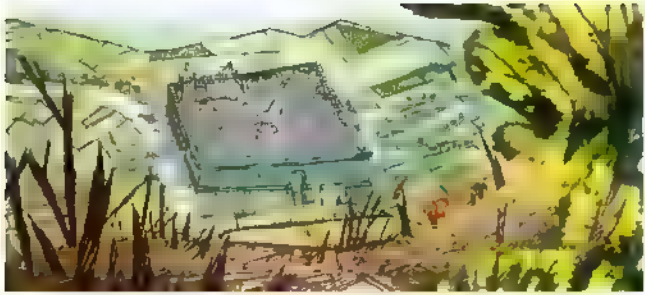
"Tomm and Ross had a vision from the beginning, and they kept it," he adds. "It took a lot of linework, but that's how they wanted it to look. They found people who could make it happen without breaking the animation process."

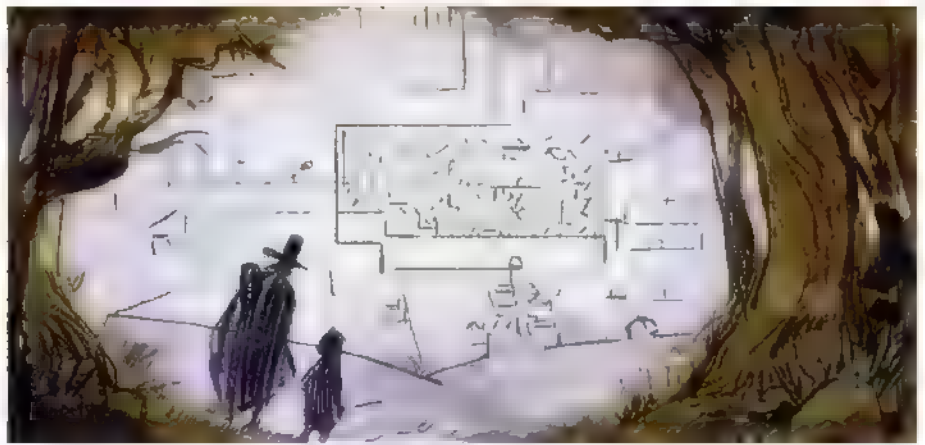
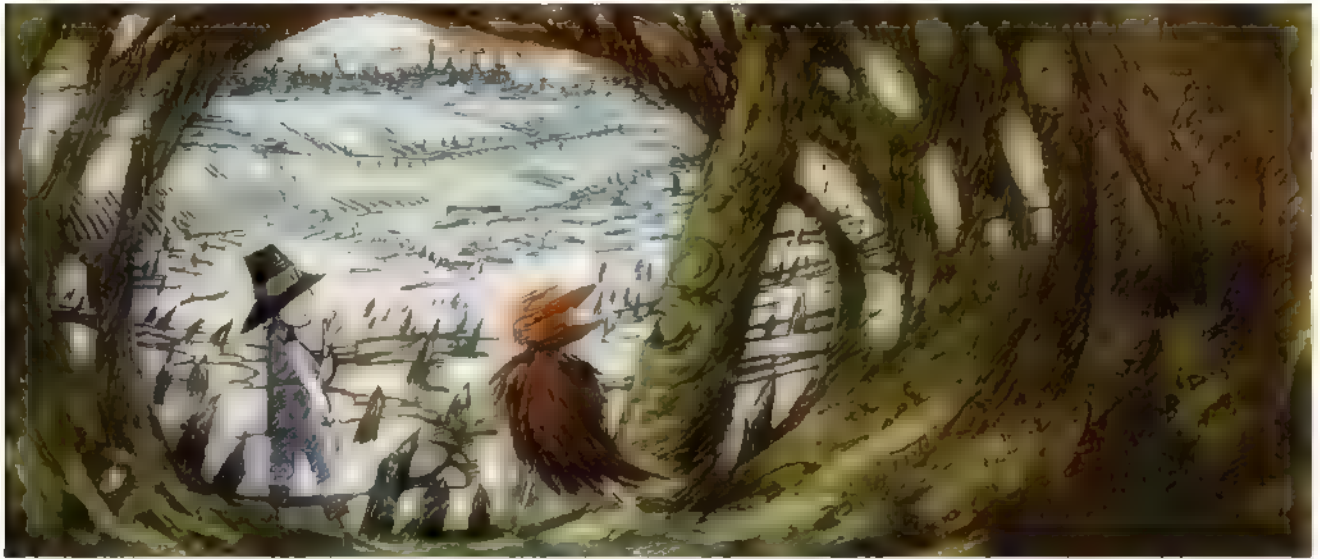
"We were influenced by Isao Takahata's *The Tale of the Princess Kaguya*, which used the language of pencil line to tell the story."

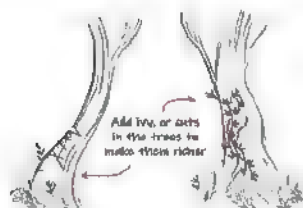
ROSS STEWART
CO-DIRECTOR

ABOVE: Ross Stewart's map ensures events in the story will unfold in a coherent space.

OPPOSITE: The fields that mark the transition between the angular world of the town and the curvilinear realm of the forest presented special challenges to the artists. Artist: Ross Stewart







1 Robin and Melbini farewell at the point where one world ends and another begins. Artist: Ross Szymanski

2 Two small sketches by Friedrich Schaeper show the curving designs of the forest.

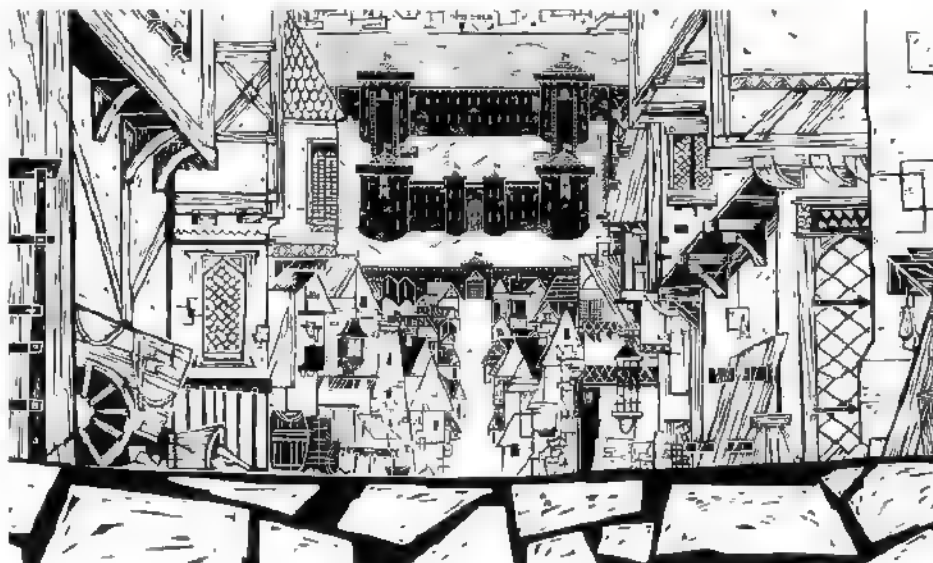
3 Bill and Robin return to the real (human) world they know. Artist: Friedrich Schaeper

4 Maria Parry's study of the forest has an ever-present green.

5 Artist: Ludovic Cavallin

6-7 Artist: Maria Parry

8 Artist: Clara Avedillo





THE IRISH FOREST

When humans settled in Ireland about nine thousand years ago, it was a forested island. Oaks and elms covered the lower elevations; pines and birches grew in poorer soil. Ferns, moss, holly, ivy, bracken, fungi, and honeysuckle covered the forest floor. In the forests lived now-extinct bears, wild boar, and wolves.

There were still extensive forests in Ireland in the sixteenth century, but the arrival of Cromwell in 1650 initiated an era of wide-scale deforestation, beginning with a campaign to eliminate possible hideouts for Irish rebels. As English maritime power grew, timber was needed for shipbuilding. The reconstruction of London after the Great Fire of 1666 required vast amounts of wood, as did the manufacture of barrel staves, which were exported to France and Spain. Trees were burned to provide charcoal for blast furnaces used to smelt iron. The growth of the English plantations led to an increased demand for pasture and farm land.

"Order was being brought to this 'wolf land,' as they called it in the English Parliament at the time," says Stewart. "They saw our land as untamed. There were rebels and rebellions. In our story, it's a time of great environmental destruction. A huge amount of the native oak forests was cut down during this time."

In *Wolfwalkers*, the Irish forests are not only home to Mebh and her wolf-like kin, they also represent the struggle between the Irish people and the Lord Protector. To the Irish, the woods are an integral part of their homeland. To the Lord Protector, they are a symbol of the resistance and disorder he intends to subdue.

The significance of the forest meant it had to be immediately recognizable as an Irish forest. Moore explains, "A lot of our artists are not from Ireland or even the UK. Their idea of a forest is a Mediterranean forest, which is very dry with different vegetation. People naturally draw from their own memories. But it's important to see how we in Irish forest is, how green it is all the time, even in autumn, when there are fallen leaves."

Concept and development artist Alice Dieudonné agrees. "Because I come from France, I tend to paint the forest I saw there. But Ross said to me, 'No, no, no. That's a French forest! We don't have those colours here.' I was pushed to find an Irish palette."

To help the artists understand the characteristic look of the Irish landscape, the filmmakers organized field trips so that people could

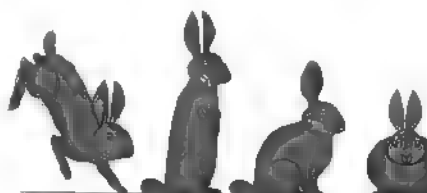
sketch and take reference photographs. "The field trips were invaluable—as are the photos from these field trips," continues Moore. "We went to a place called Killybeg, where there's a hidden waterfall in a beautiful little valley. We were only supposed to go there for an hour or two, but people stayed nine or ten hours, until the sun went down."

"As animators, we sit eight hours a day in front of the computer, and we tend to look for pictures on the web," adds Dieudonné. "But going outside and seeing the light and the moss and the textures of things gives you a feeling for them. When you walk through the forest, you learn how it looks at different times of day and in different light."

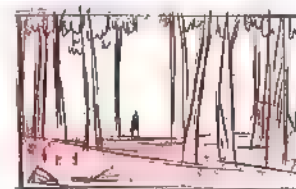
Background line supervisor Eduardo Jaramasceno, who comes from Brazil, agrees. "I struggled to go from the feeling of a tropical forest to an Irish forest. You start to learn the names of the trees. Then, when you draw, you know what you're drawing. You make the oak leaves look like oak leaves. Everything feels brighter and nicer to draw because it makes more sense."

"We went to beautiful forests, and I got lost on one of the tours. I thought I would be there forever," he continues with a rueful laugh. "I had the idea of walking beyond the path to see the forest. Not my brightest idea, but it was nice."

Ireland is called the Emerald Isle for a reason: It's very green because it rains all the time," concludes colour background supervisor Stefano Scapolan. "The undergrowth in the forest reflects the climate, which is cold and wet. You have trees covered in moss. You have shades of deep emerald and dark turquoise with the bright red of the leaves that have just fallen, because the film takes place in autumn. Autumn is difficult to capture anywhere, but in Ireland even more so."



2



1 This simple sketch indicates the curvilinear feel of the forest, showing how the mind of sketchy, receding look the artists wanted to avoid. Artist: Ahmed Rashedo

2 Maria Jurek's drawings are clear and stylized, yet retain a rabbit's soft curves.

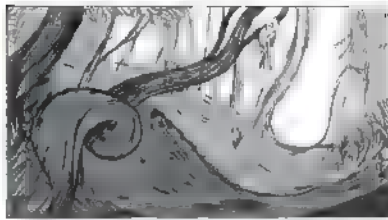
OPPOSITE Maria Jurek interprets the look of the forest.

3 A photograph shows the vibrant greens and rusty browns of the Irish forest.

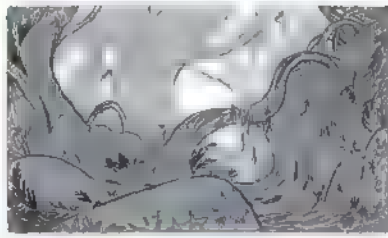
4 Robyn covertly watches her father hunting.



3



4



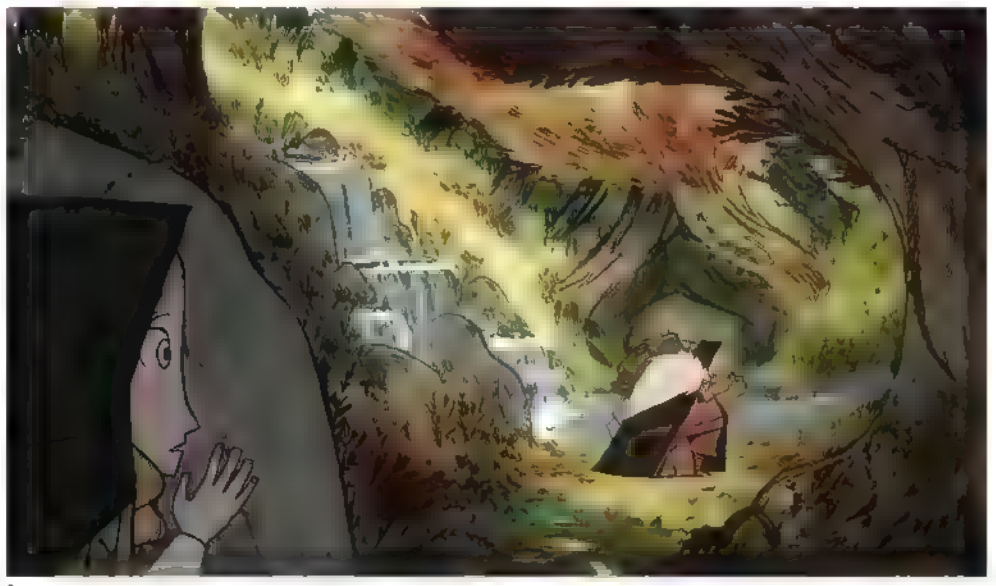
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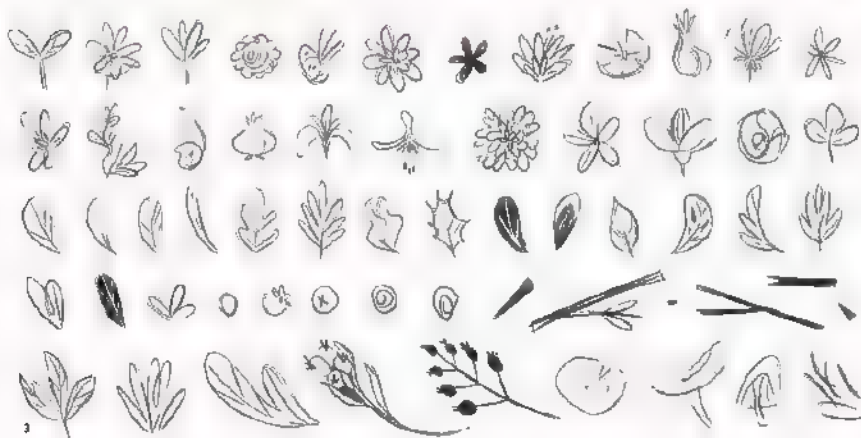
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8



THIS PAGE: 1. The first illustration is a black bird. 2. The second illustration is a red bird. 3. The third illustration is a blue bird. 4. The fourth illustration is a yellow bird. 5. The fifth illustration is a black beetle. 6. The sixth illustration is a red beetle. 7. The seventh illustration is a black fly. 8. The eighth illustration is a green grasshopper. 9. The ninth illustration is a grey rabbit. 10. The tenth illustration is a brown squirrel. 11. The eleventh illustration is a white butterfly. 12. The twelfth illustration is a brown butterfly. 13. The thirteenth illustration is a red butterfly. 14. The fourteenth illustration is a brown fox. 15. The fifteenth illustration is a black deer. 16. The sixteenth illustration is a brown squirrel.





①

②

③

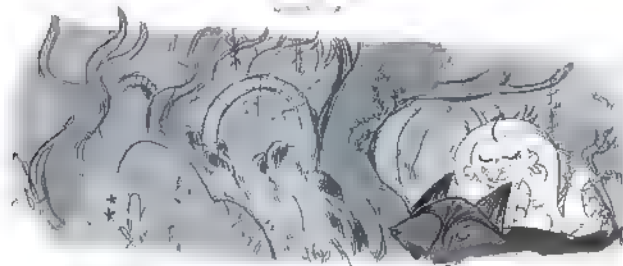
④

⑤



more individual trees
less thickets change
more broken in trees
at the bottom

1



less decorated

+ magical



⑥ Inside Ravine ... lush! Big FG in composition!
Full flowers and bushes! 7 shapes! Big rocks
with carvings



1-2 Almu Rendano's pencil sketches follow Robyn through various parts of the forest.

3 Mesh rides through the ravine Almu Rendano describes Artist: Maria Parrya

4 Oak trees, ferns, and sandstone all grow in lush forests. Artist: Maria Parrya

5 A rock with mystic carvings emerges from the grove. Artist: Maria Parrya

6 Maria Parrya's drawings show how the rocks become larger and less angular as the characters move from the town to the forest.

7 Robyn enters the ravine. Artist: Alice Theobald

8 An early study of the ravine. Artist: Maria Parrya



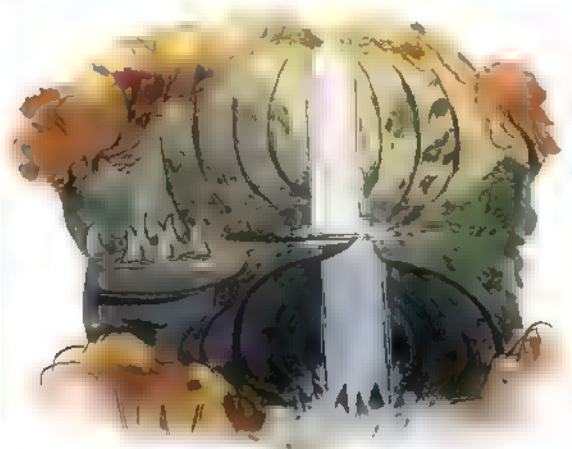
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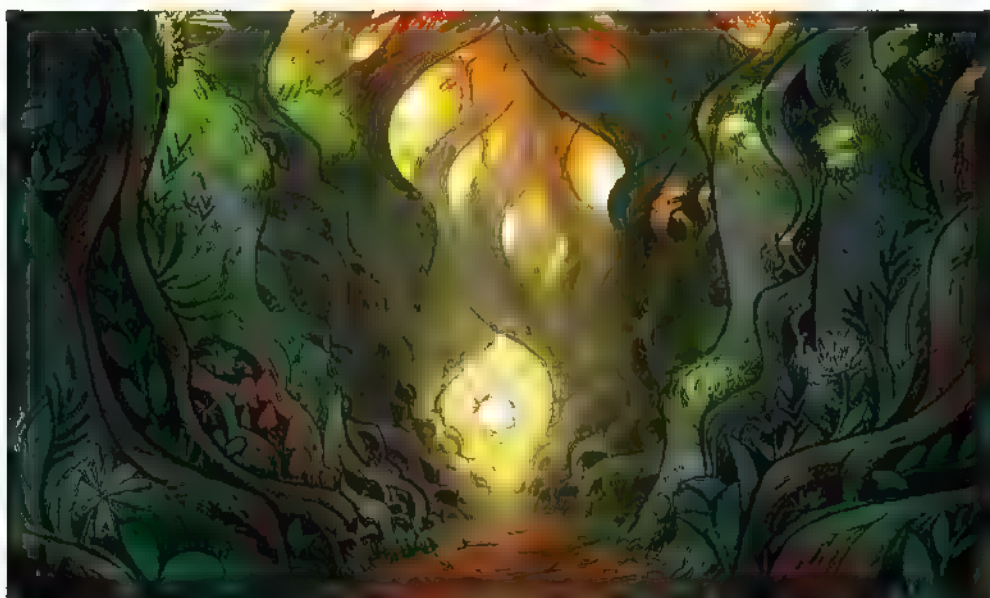
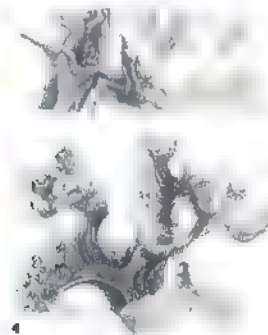
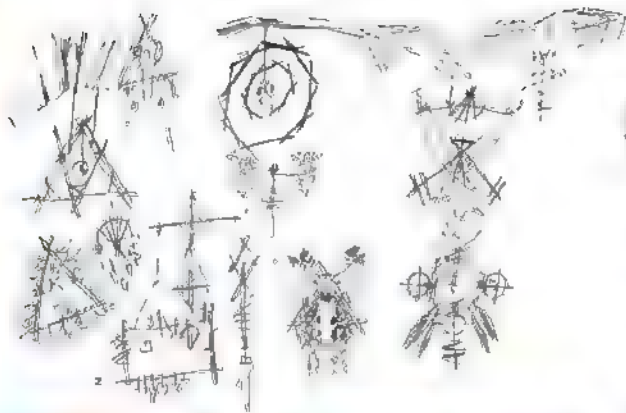
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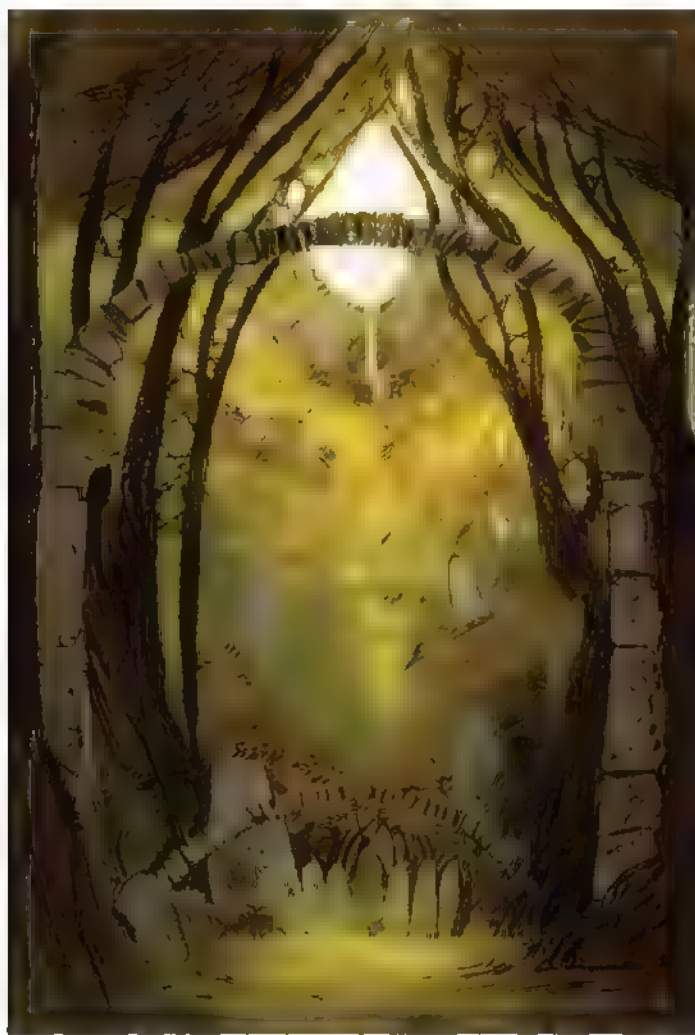
1-2 Alice Flourens's delicate sketches for the cave have a feeling of Native American art

3 One of the Wolfeniker traps at the end of a secret pathway. Artist: Alma Plekshina

4 Four stacks of tree trunks and branches. Artist: Alma Plekshina

OPPOSITE The painting of the ravine suggests a fusion of the natural and supernatural. Artist: Ross Stowar





1



2



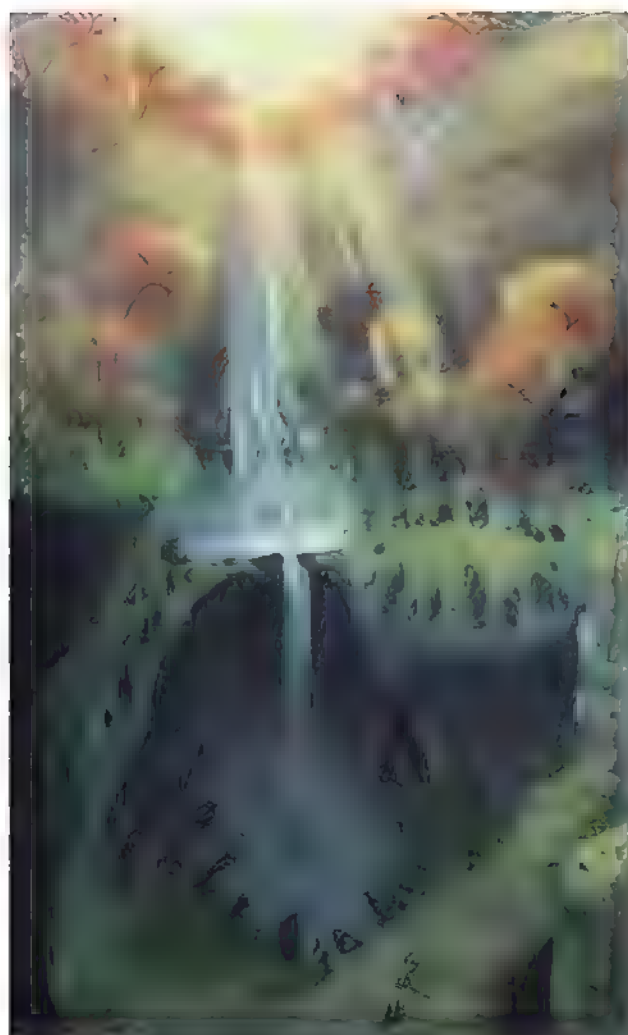
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The top of the tree is a glowing yellow light source.

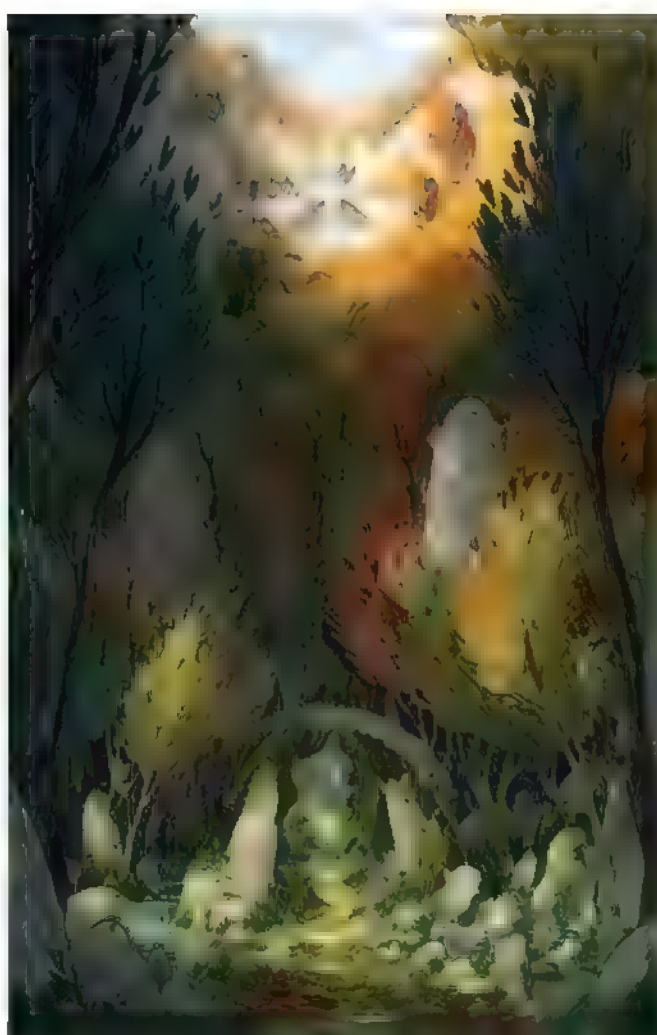
1 3 The top of the tree is a glowing yellow light source. The top of the tree is a glowing yellow light source.

4 The top of the tree is a glowing yellow light source. The top of the tree is a glowing yellow light source.

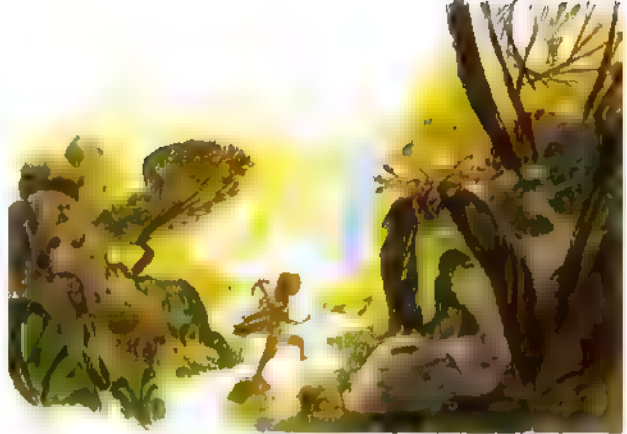
5 A glowing yellow light source. The top of the tree is a glowing yellow light source.

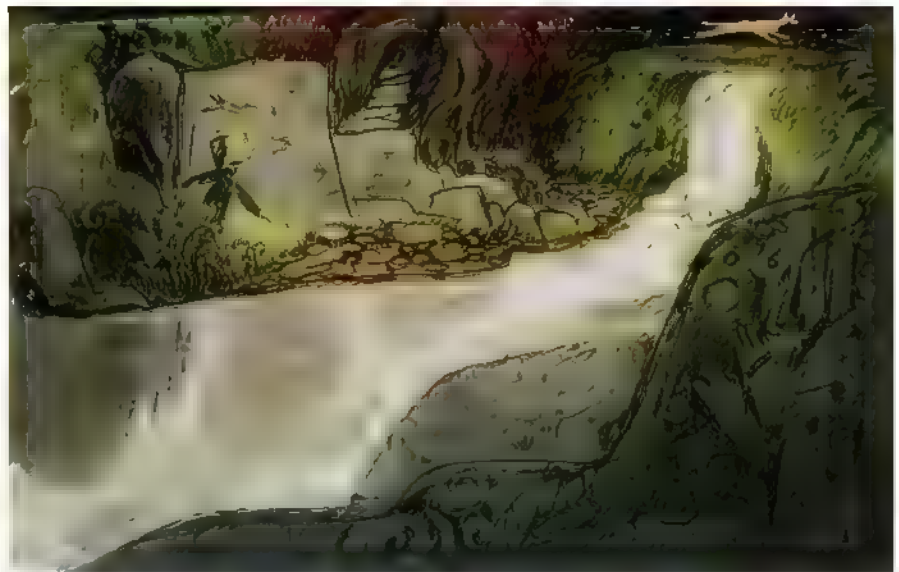
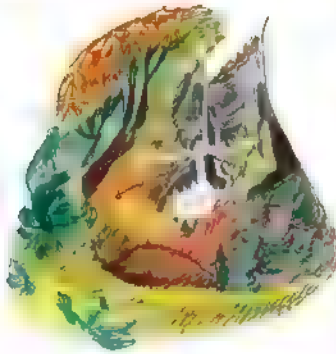
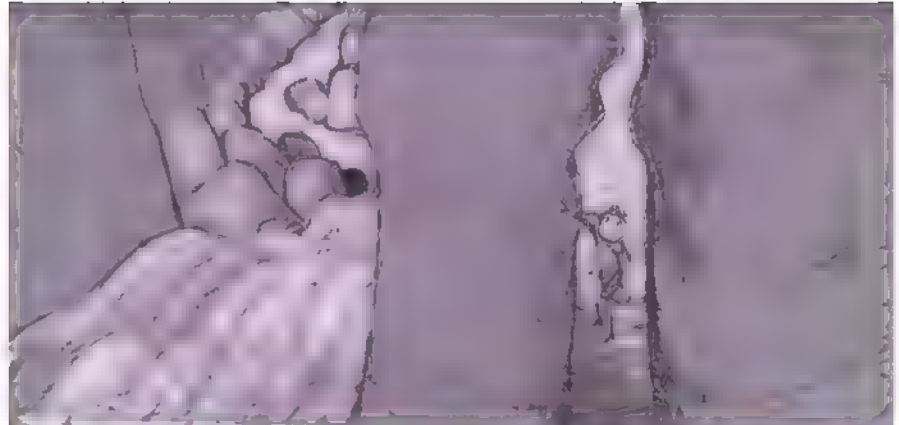


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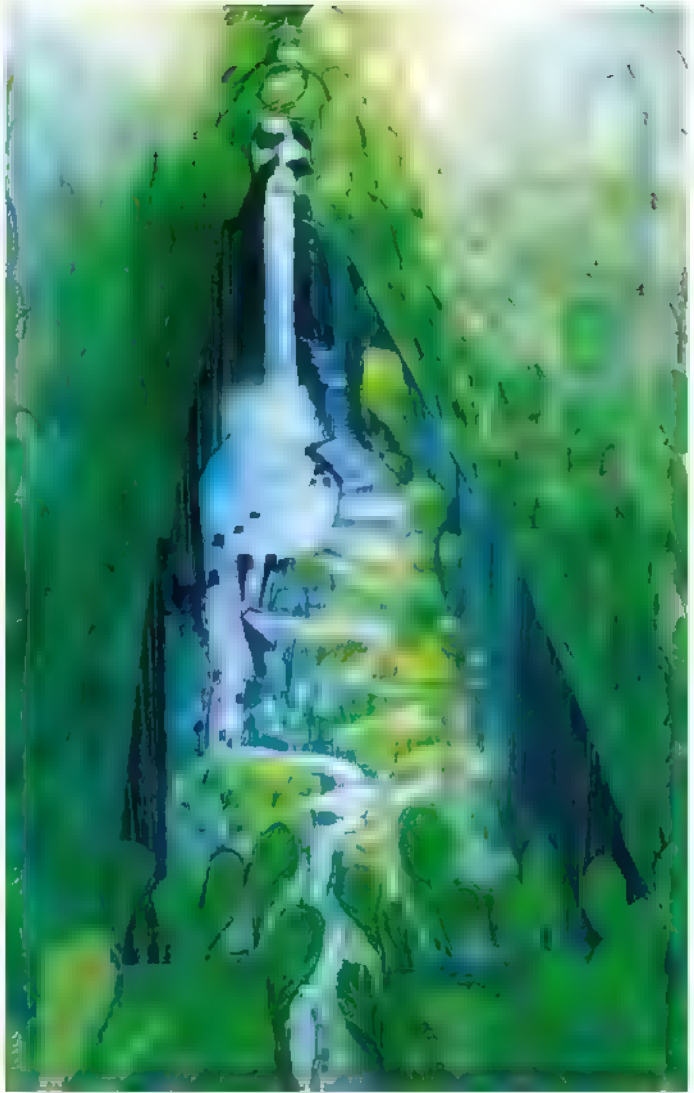
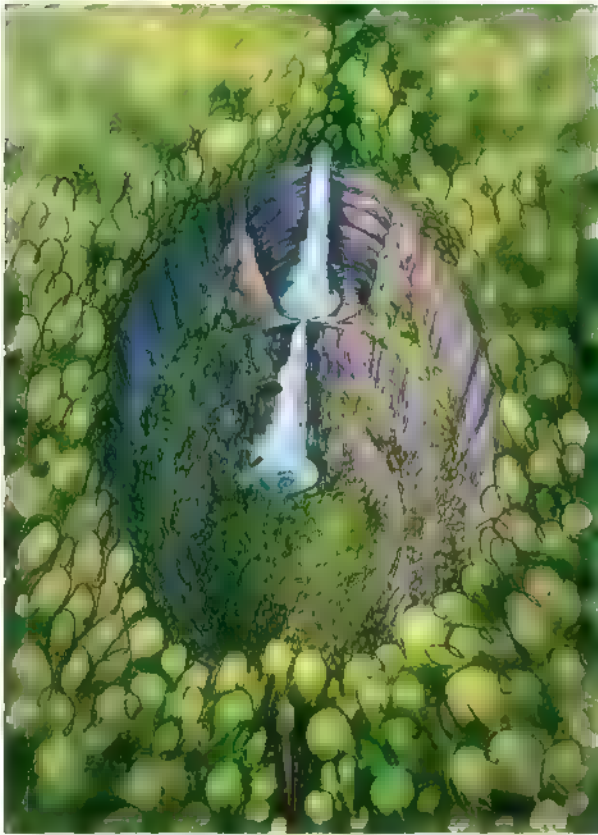
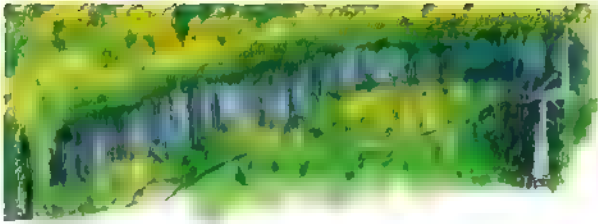


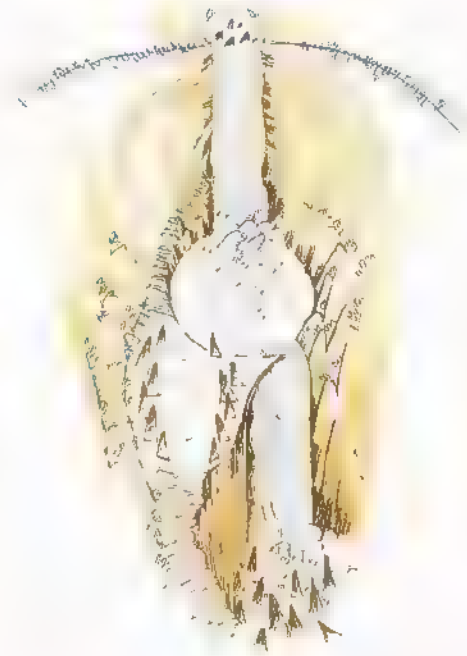
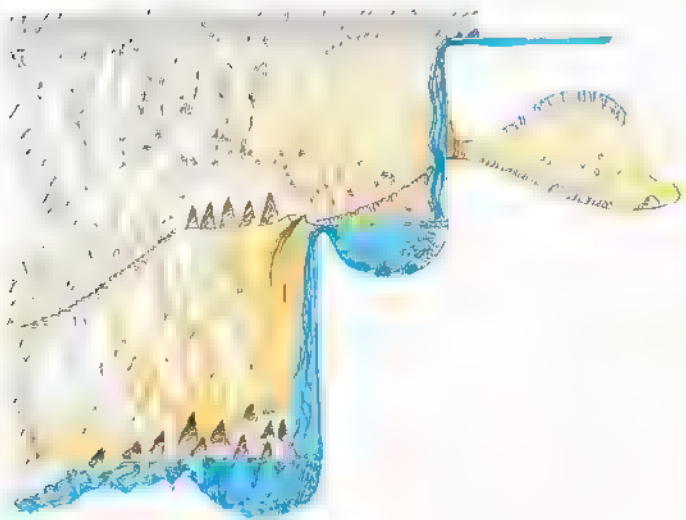
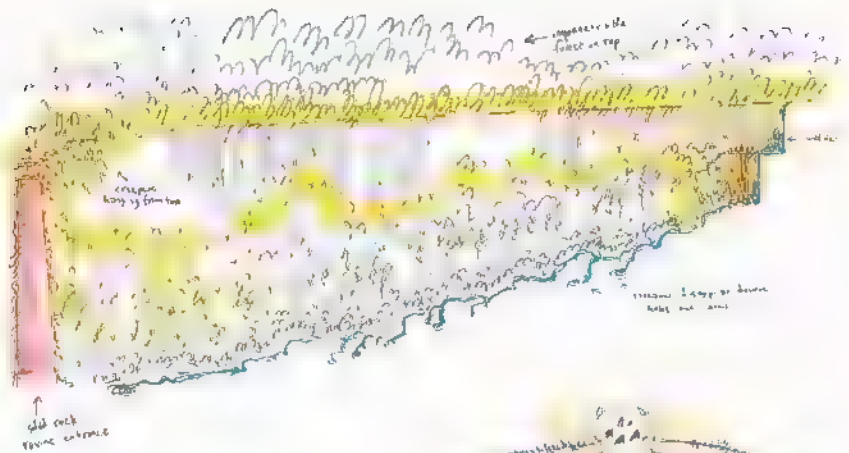


"We had to tell the artists from warmer countries to imagine their socks were wet from walking in the grass."

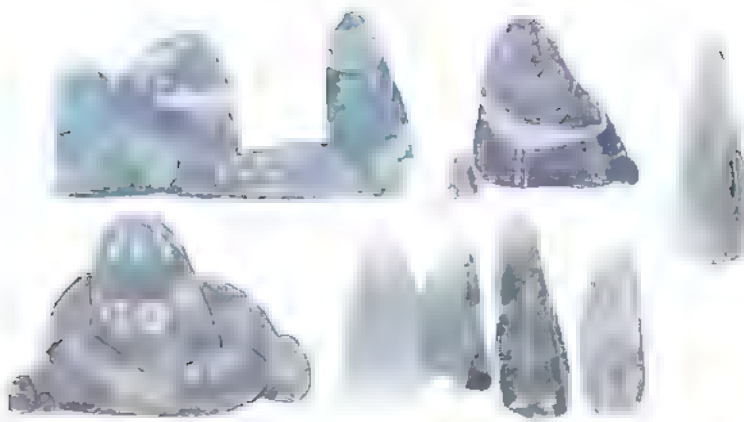
ROSS STARK CO DIRECTOR

THIS SPREAD The watercolor illustrations were created by a team of artists from various countries, including the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. The illustrations were created in a style that was both realistic and whimsical, capturing the essence of the story.

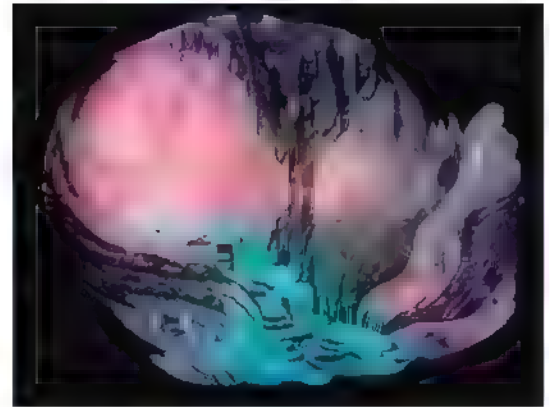








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OPPOSITE The artist's work is a collection of small, dark, textured objects, possibly stones or pieces of wood, arranged in two rows. The top row has four objects and the bottom row has three. They vary in shape, some being rounded and others more angular.

1. The artist's work is a collection of small, dark, textured objects, possibly stones or pieces of wood, arranged in two rows. The top row has four objects and the bottom row has three. They vary in shape, some being rounded and others more angular.

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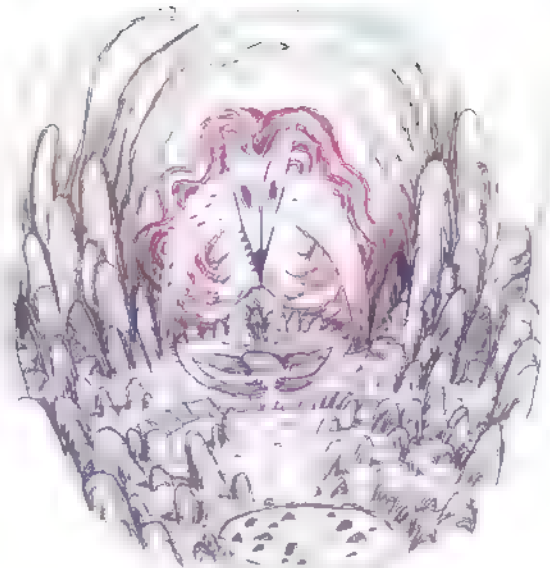
3. The artist's work is a collection of small, dark, textured objects, possibly stones or pieces of wood, arranged in two rows. The top row has four objects and the bottom row has three. They vary in shape, some being rounded and others more angular.

4. The artist's work is a collection of small, dark, textured objects, possibly stones or pieces of wood, arranged in two rows. The top row has four objects and the bottom row has three. They vary in shape, some being rounded and others more angular.

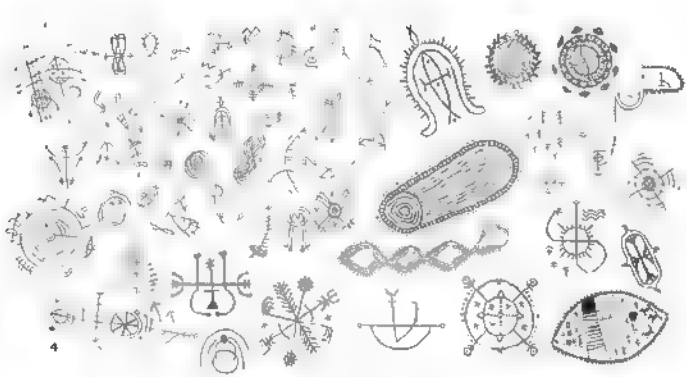
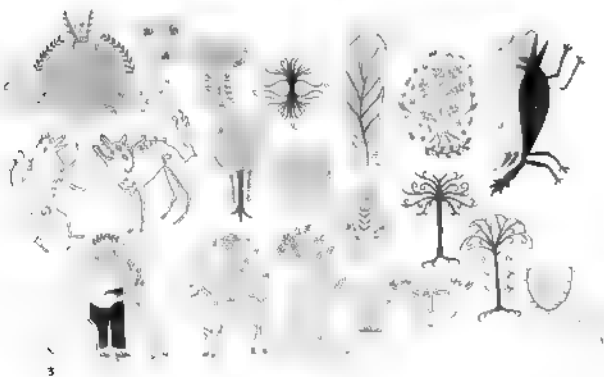
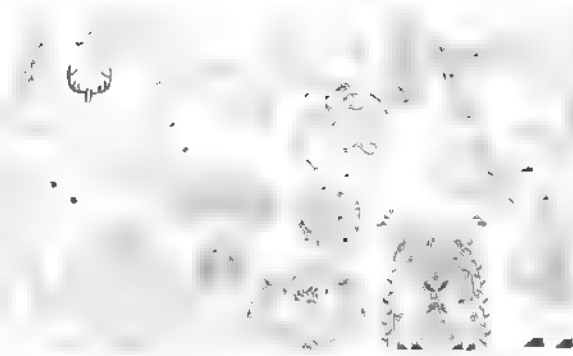
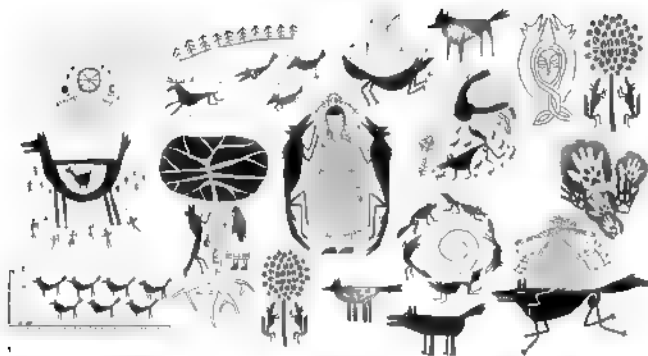
5. The artist's work is a collection of small, dark, textured objects, possibly stones or pieces of wood, arranged in two rows. The top row has four objects and the bottom row has three. They vary in shape, some being rounded and others more angular.



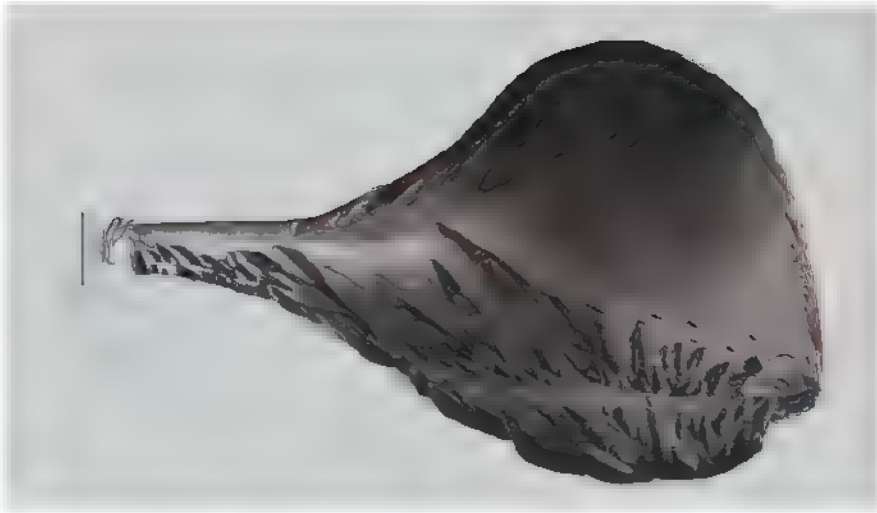
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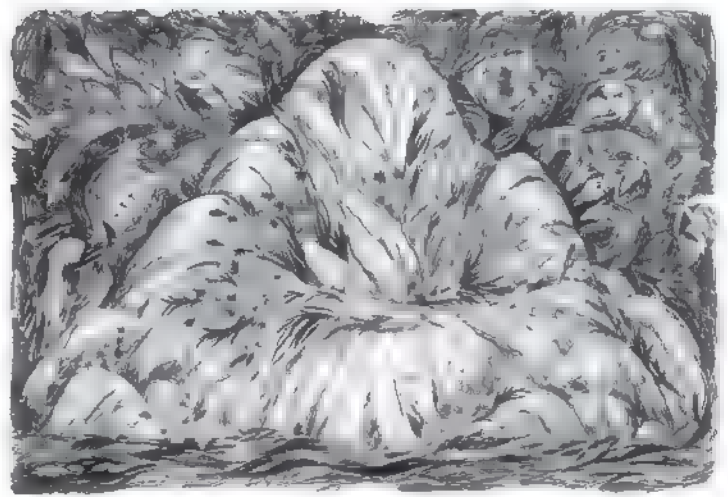
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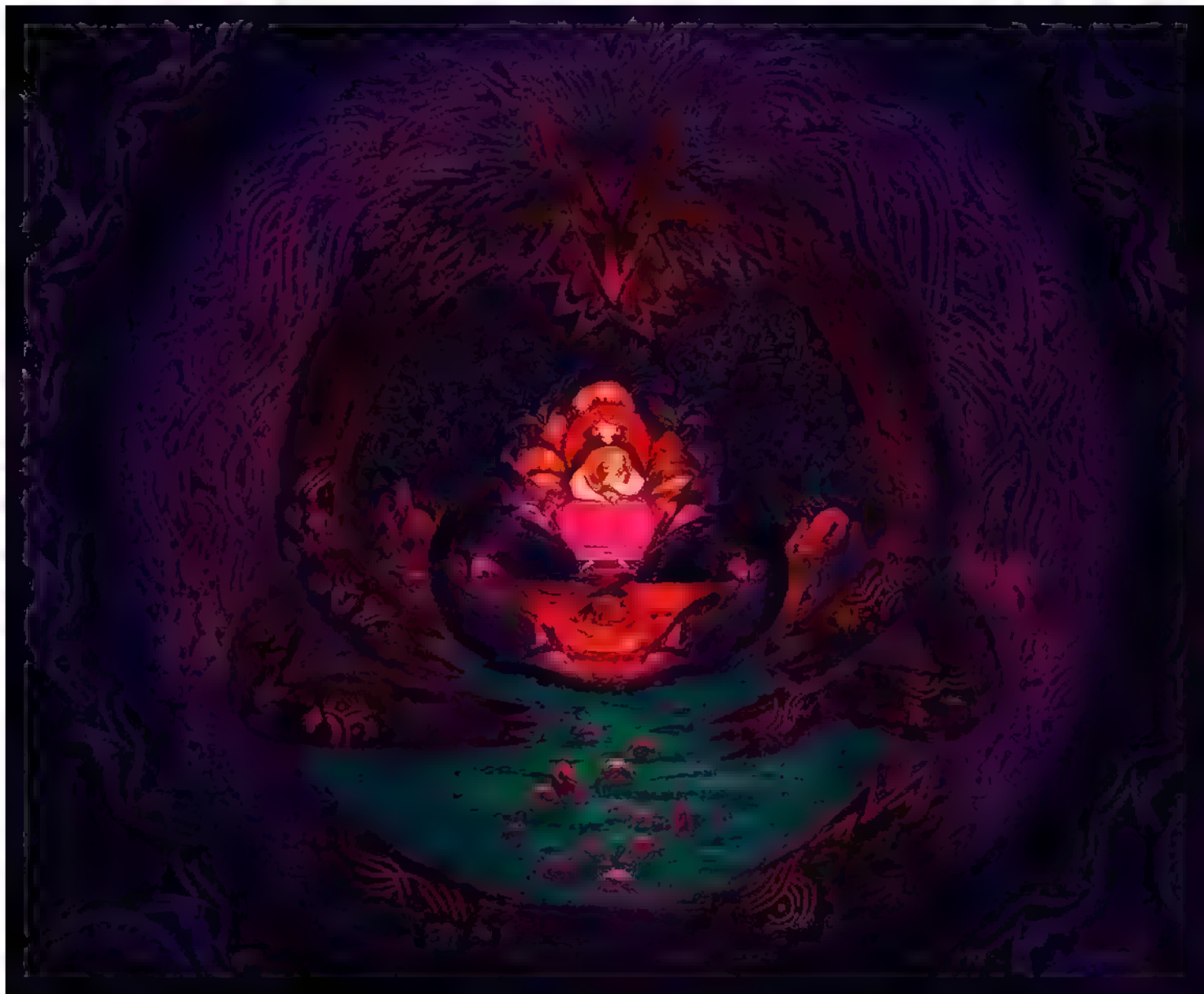
9



1. An uncertain Moll and Robyn join Moll, who sits in her tower, guarded by the wolf pack.
Artist: Camille Chao.

2. The depths of the wolf cave. Source: Illustration by Maria F. Pardo.

3. A close-up of Moll. Although similar, Lily Rowland's three studies of Moll and Moll on the fence offer nuanced differences in tone and mood.





VI. Layout and Background

The work of the layout artist suggests a combination of set design and cinematography. The layout artists organize the ideas of the designers, visual development and storyboard artists into a form the rest of the crew can use to realize the directors vision for the film.

Before a scene goes into production, the layout artists prepare the workbook drawings that describe the camera moves, the levels of animation and effects, the character's path of action, the light source(s), and so on. Layout drawings do not appear in the finished film; they serve as guides for the artists as they work. If an artist doesn't follow the layout, a character may end up too far away from the door to exit or the scene may not link up with the ones before and after it.

The highly stylized look of *Waltzmakers* posed special challenges and offered special opportunities. Layout supervisor Leo Weiss explains: "There are certain things you can and cannot do in this style that you could in a realistic environment. Complex camera moves with lots of depth are very difficult to achieve. But that forces us to find creative solutions. Those questions have to be dealt with in layout, quite early in the production process."

The layout artists work in black and white. If the composition of a scene can be read clearly, it will probably remain clear when colour is added. Weiss says: "When building the layouts in black and white you can check the contrast and see if the silhouette reads well. Is it dark against bright or is it muddy and even? Desaturating things helps you analyse whether the contrast is interesting or if it could be improved."

The organic, curvilinear world of the forest posed special problems. "For the wolves, you'd leave the area where the characters are going to be relatively empty because the tiny leaves in the forest can get very busy very quickly," Weiss continues. "If you want the character to read well, you put it in a quiet spot. Playing with these zones of contrast shows the characters and action better."

The city of Kilkenny beyond the studio's windows was a continuing source of inspiration and reference, but the artists didn't want to depict the town literally. It served as a jumping-off point for their imaginations.

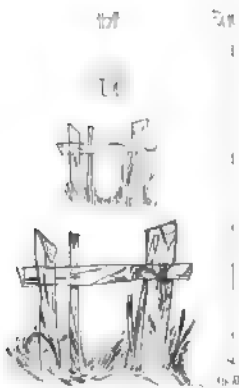
"The style of the film is very graphic, so there's no need to match the architecture too precisely," says Weiss. "Some of the elements in the real Kilkenny helped to create believable designs, but those designs are very stylized. Still, if you grew up in a medieval village, you'd recognize these shapes."

When lead layout artist Antonia Gancheva did research on the historic city, she discovered that seventeenth-century Kilkenny was divided into three areas: St. John's Suburb (a walled neighborhood on the other side of the river), Inishtown (the main city), and Hightown (near the castle). She used the information to create designs that reflect both the physical and social structure of Kilkenny.

"We start with the poorer houses near the gates, which have been further beaten up in the Lord Protector's invasion," she explains. "I added more traditional Irish cottages to this area and suggested we use thatched roofs, with wattle and daub and wood as building materials. We limited the buildings to a maximum of two floors. The windows are covered with wooden shutters and/or greased cloth instead of glass."

"In Inishtown, we have merchant buildings, more elaborate market stalls and a few snug cottages," she adds. "Glass windows and chimneys start to appear; the building materials shift to brick, stone, and wood. More intricate detailing marks the houses of the wealthy in Hightown. In the seventeenth century you would show off your wealth by having glass windows, which were not only expensive but also heavily taxed."

Background artists need the talents of both a set designer and an easel painter to render believable landscapes and interiors. The imagery in their paintings has to match the layouts. The most beautiful



OPPOSITE Although the night looks peaceful, the dreamy shadows of the forest and the figures in the forest are clearly shown. Art by Anders Dong, colour by Leo Weiss.

ABOVE A study of stylized trees, creating a sense of perspective. Artist: Leo Weiss.

rendered palace interior is useless if the door or the stairs are in the wrong place for the action. Once the director has OK'd the layouts for a sequence, the background artists go to work.

For *Wolfwalkers*, the background department had a team of artists who focused on the network preserving the two-line style of the film.

"Once the scene and its setting are planned, it goes to the background department, where everything's painted," says Eduardo Damasceno, background final line supervisor. "But for *Wolfwalkers*, the directors demanded certain lines. We get the layouts and draw a final line before it goes to colour. That line shows on the final background. In the forest, it's a pencil line that feels organic, like a traditional drawing; in the city, it's a woodcut line. Tomm and Ross wanted to see those lines on the screen."

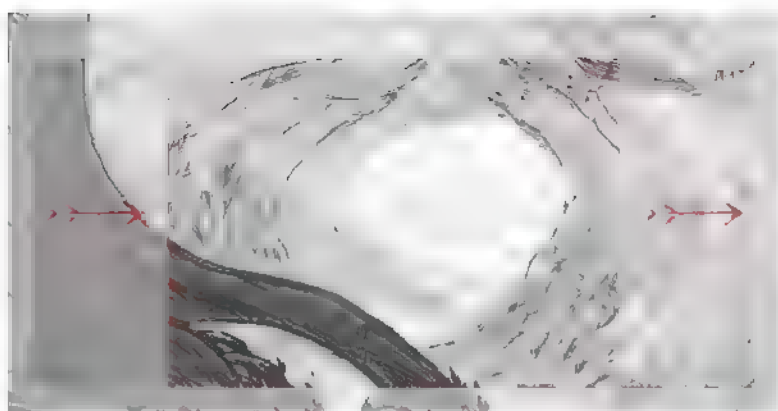
"The layout team creates the compositions according to the storyboards, but they don't put everything in the film's style—that's something I do," explains Camille Tanguy, background final line lead. "They compose the main elements of the backgrounds. When I get the file, I put a piece of paper on top of it and draw the final line, preparing the material for the next team, who'll do the colour. There are different styles in the movie. Even the forest changes. Some parts have more curves."

"Our department works mostly with traditional media. We do everything by hand on paper," adds Damasceno. "Every forest background is drawn in pencil; every city background is in ink. The main thing is to keep everything looking like a traditional drawing and not clean it up too much. Not every line is perfect. When we scan artwork into Photoshop, we sometimes add small bits of dirt around the lines."

To complement the graphic designs of the characters, the backgrounds were designed as a succession of levels to create an illusion of depth. Walt Disney's artists developed a comparable technique in the 1930s with the multiplane camera: Elements of the background were painted on sheets of glass that might be positioned a few inches or several feet apart. But the multiplane camera was difficult and expensive to use. Computer technology allows the Cartoon Saloon artists to achieve a similar effect more efficiently.

"Because the artwork looks flat, we're creating a multiplane effect," Damasceno explains. "You break the perspective sometimes and have a Cubist view of some objects, which helps vary the flatness while adding character to the drawings."

"Kilkenny is supposed to look like a cage much of the time. So we end up with a lot of verticals and horizontals—a lot of grids," he continues. "The characters are supposed to feel trapped when



they're in the city and feel free when they're in the forest. For the forest, I thought about how Tyrus Wong made the forest look cozy yet wild in *Bambi*."

"It was a struggle to get the lines and the colour to work together properly," says art director Maria Pareja. "The town style is clearer. You do the block-print look, and it's fine. But the forest has the sketchy, loose style. Not everyone draws that way naturally, so they had to practice a bit more. All the different plants and the trees with their different bark means there's a lot of variations. While we needed that variety, it couldn't look like different forests."

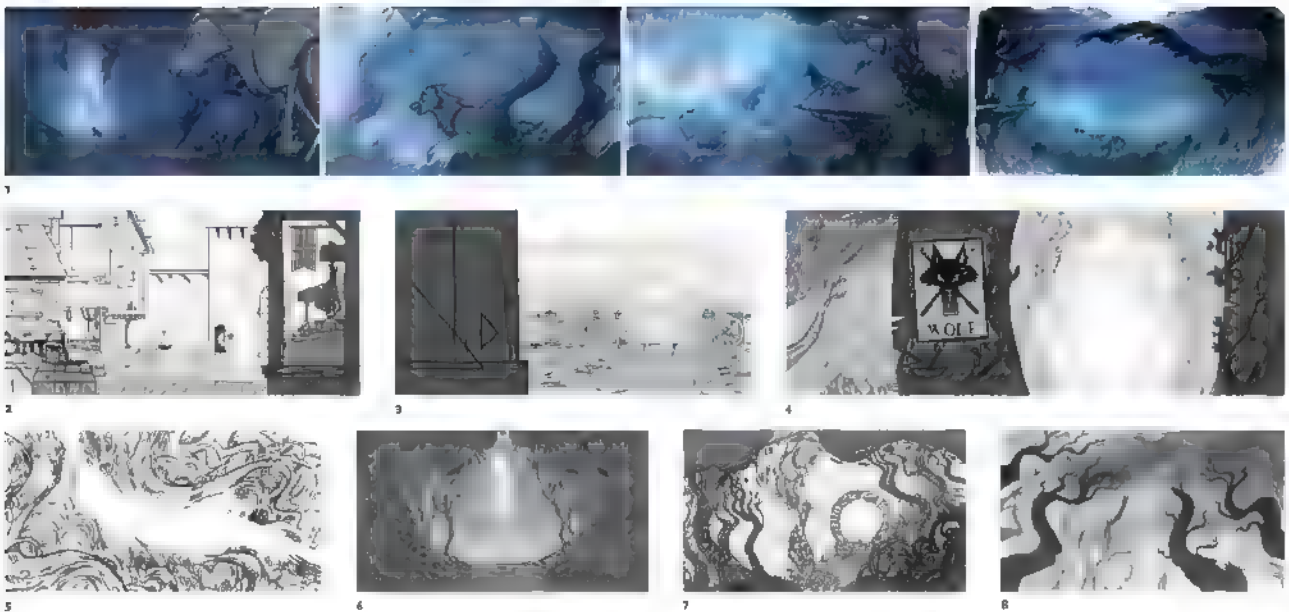
Like the designers, the background artists had to make sure their work was immediately recognizable as an Irish forest. Stewart comments, "Layout artist Pauline Cagnaire loves being in the wilds with Nature. She was very knowledgeable about the different types of plants and put so much natural detail in her layouts. Many animation artists are used to doing made-up things, rather than starting with real species and stylizing them. We tried to get the artists to look at the real plant first, then stylize it."

"It's just like life drawing," agrees Moore. "If you're not practicing all the time, you think an arm goes one way. It's only when you see the model and try to draw an arm that you understand. It's about drawing from life. You have to remind yourself because your imagination loves to edit."

Once the network was completed, the backgrounds moved on to the painters. Colour background supervisor Stefano Scapolan

"The main goal of layout is to make the character as readable as possible in a scene. The composition should work toward that, the silhouette should work toward that. Anything that interferes with the readability shouldn't be there. The character should be at the center of the viewer's attention: Look here."

LEO WEISS
LAYOUT SUPERVISOR



OPPOSITE The red markings on this layout of the forest indicate how the camera will move through the scene. Artist: Pauline Lagnardie

1 Maria Pareja subduces drawings rendered in watercolor to create the "Blue" of the sky with a watercolor effect.

2 Artists: Anne-Cécile Bédard

3 Artists: Romy, Joly

4 Artists: José Bonifazi

5 Artists: Jean Weiss

6 Artists: Guillelmo Rossi, Fodor

7 Artists: Anthony Gendreau and Jean Weiss

8 Artists: Jean Weiss

recalls, "Wherever the linework is the most detailed, our work is the simplest because we can just focus on big broad shapes of colour. Otherwise, you won't see the colour and you won't see the line—it's going to become a mess. The more intense the line, the less we need in terms of colour."

"Lots of planning was involved. Apart from the colour sketch done in pre-production, each sequence requires a new colour sketch with the final linework in place," he explains. "For each shot, we map how the colour needs to be placed, especially in the complicated woodcut style in the city. We're directing the eye of the viewer to where the action is taking place, so we don't always paint between the lines. In the areas where we want the viewer's attention to be focused, the painting is between the lines; farther back, the colour and the linework start to disappear."

The artists take pride in the fact that the background is hand-painted, with only minor corrections added in the computer. Following the examples set in the colour script and scene illustra-

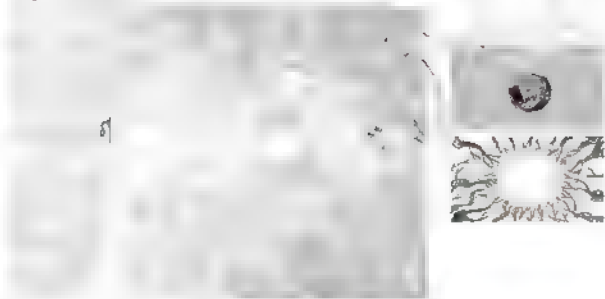
tions, the background artists used colour to heighten the emotional impact of their paintings—and the story.

"In one set of sequences, there's a sunset lighting the casino square," explains Scapouin. "The colour progression is almost a realistic sunset. It took more than fifty backgrounds. There's an emotional buildup in that moment. We have the strong red of the sun coming through the gate, which frames where the action takes place."

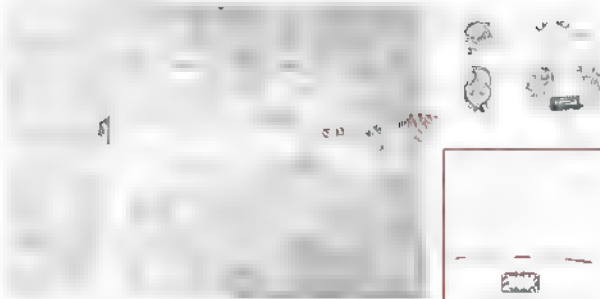
The artists also shifted the style of painting from scene to scene. Even the individual brushstrokes support the emotions of the characters. Scapouin adds, "In the wolf attack, where there's aggression and confusion, the style becomes very rough. We switch from soft water colour to dry brush. The colour palette is reduced and the contrast enhanced. Everything gets an extra kick from the way it's painted."

"Toimin and Ross really treasure the final look," he concludes. "They had a vision from the beginning, and they kept to it. It involved a lot of linework, but that's how they wanted it to look, and that's how it looks."

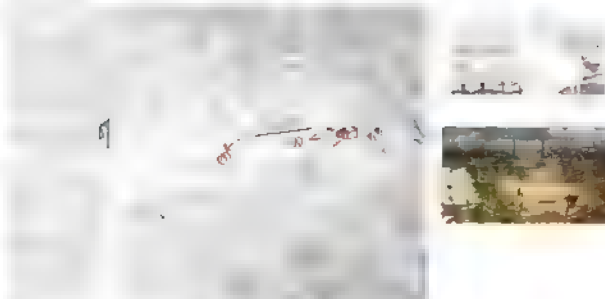
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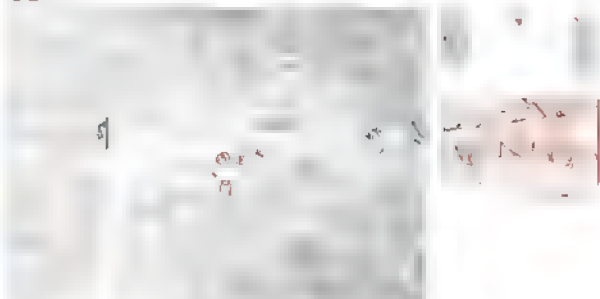
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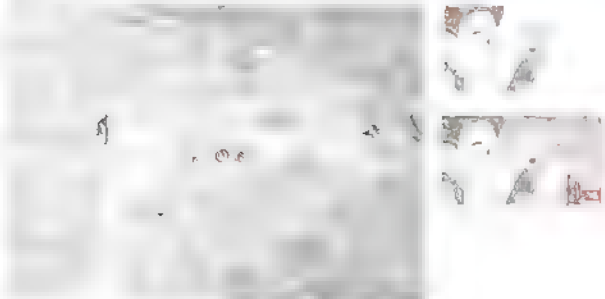
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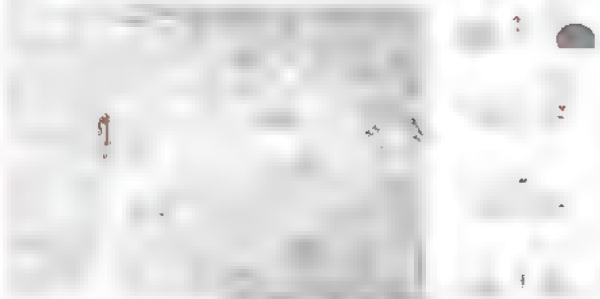
Sc 009



Sc 010



Sc 011



"Trying to marry the linework in the backgrounds with the linework on the characters was a huge task. We had to ensure the elements that make the backgrounds rich aren't making them the most important things in the shot. The background needs to complement the animation, to enhance the path of action, and ensure the characters are setting the mood."

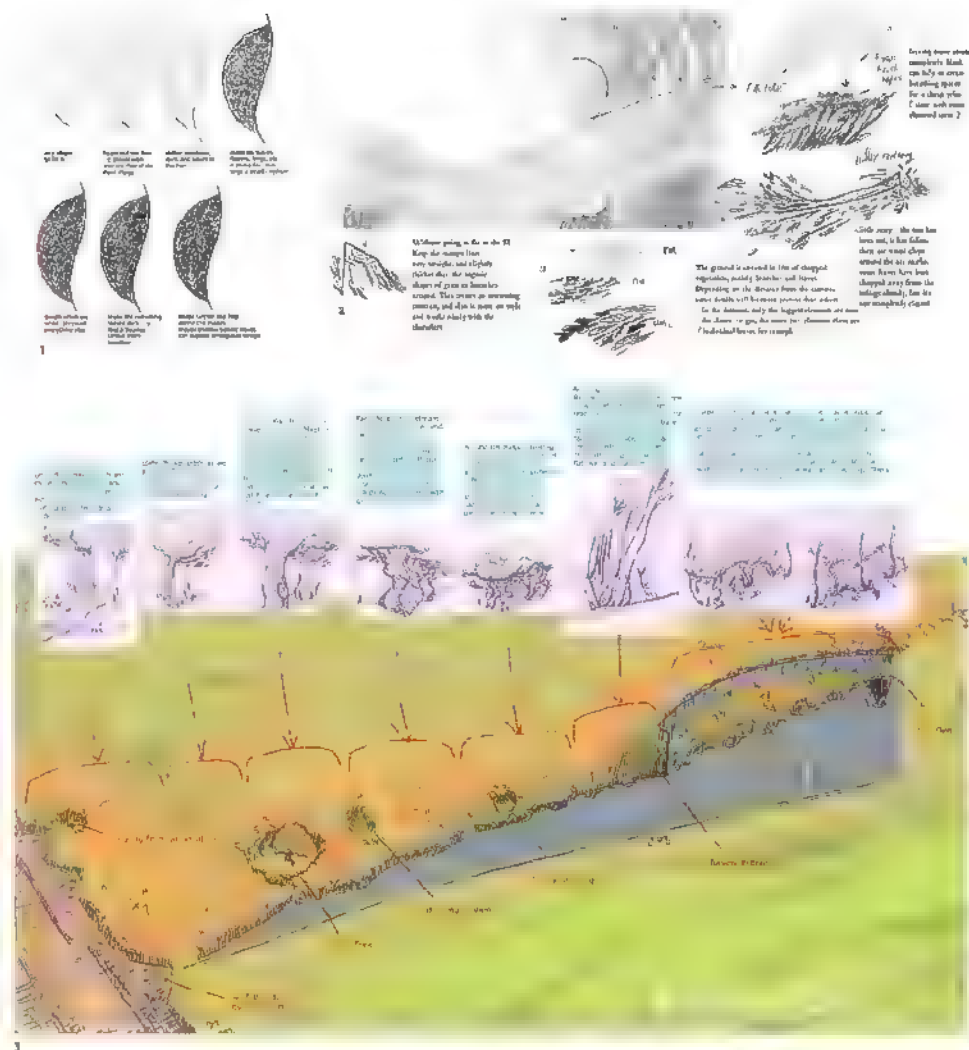
STEFANO SCAPOLAN
COLOUR BACKGROUND
SUPERVISOR

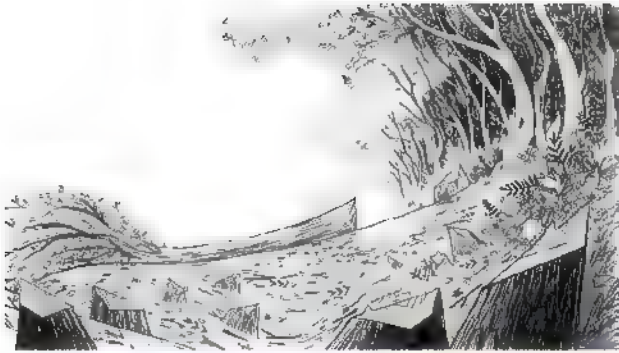
OPPOSITE Lee Weiss's notes and drawings demonstrate how the layout artists work out the staging of a sequence. The characters' relation to the settings and how the areas where the action takes place relate to each other must be clear to both the filmmakers and the audience. Various artists.

1 Artist: Ross Stewart

2 Artist: Lee Weiss

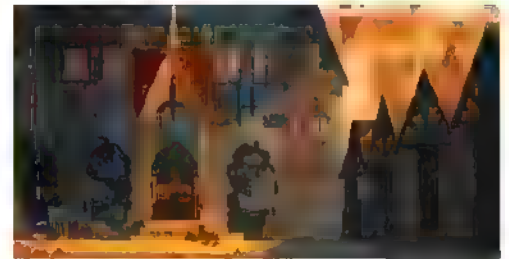
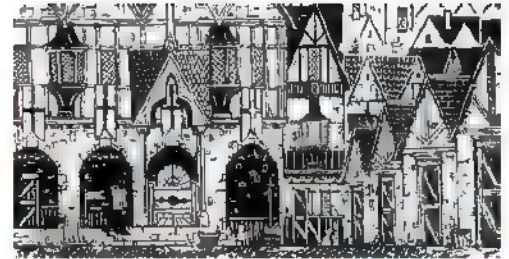
3 The trees change as the scene moves away from the town to the hinterland and wider parts of the forest. Artist: Ross Stewart







4



6

OPPOSITE The edge of the forest, where logging is taking place. The angular, recastings show the setting is near town and being taken over by humans

1 A line drawing of the background

2 The painted background

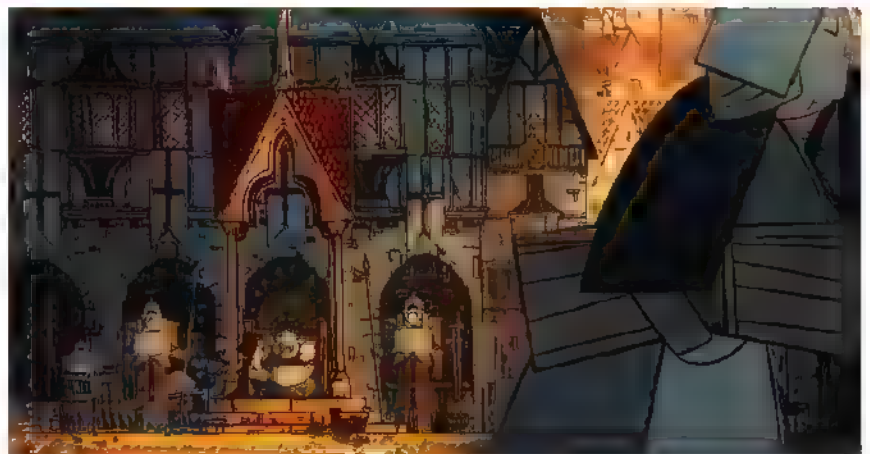
3 The final scene with the characters in place
Artist: "admiral" Joville

4 "Tidy" is a relative term for working artists

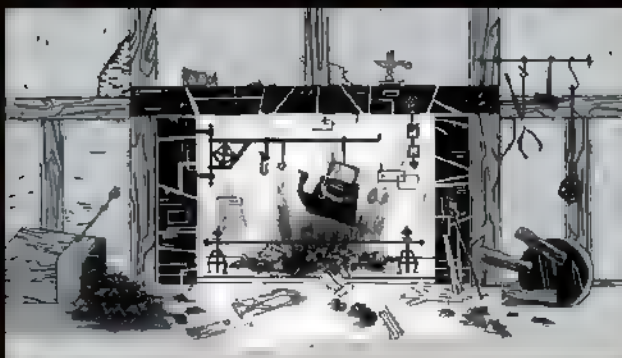
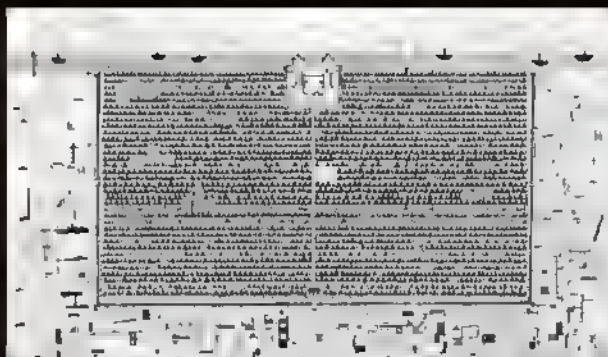
5 The line drawing of a background in Killenny

6 The painted background

7 The final scene with the characters
Done by Laura Aveillo colour by Joville. e. where

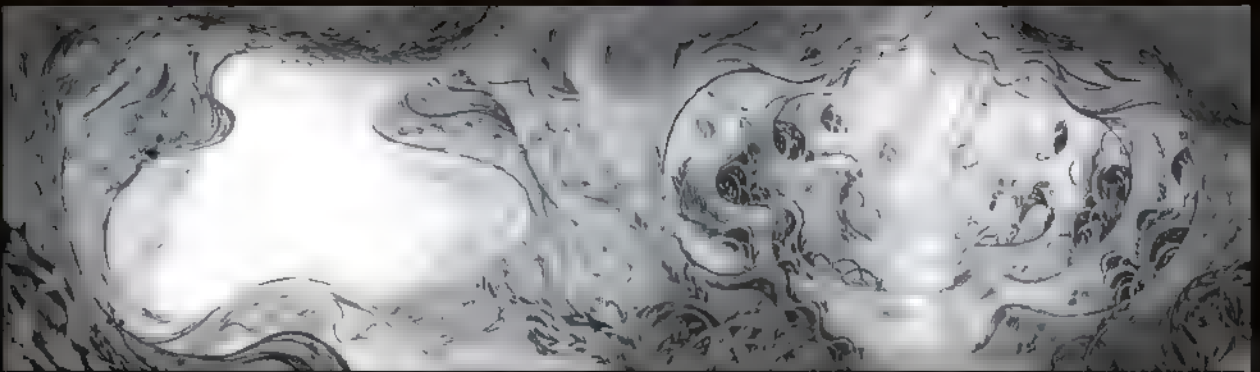
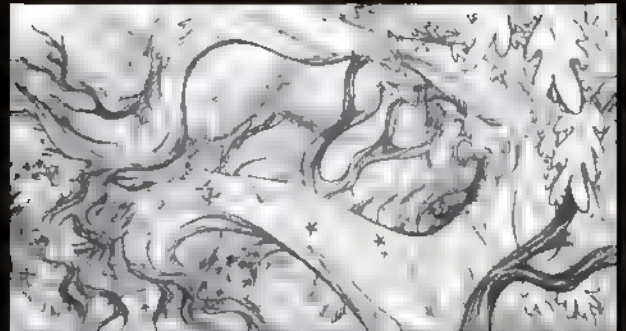
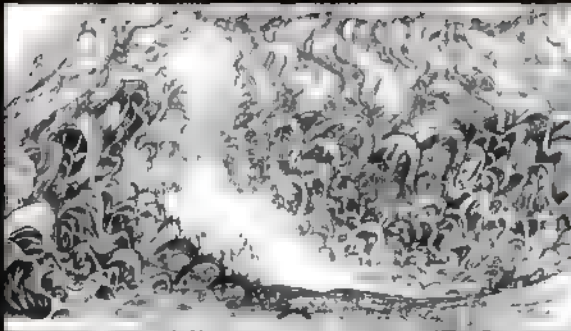


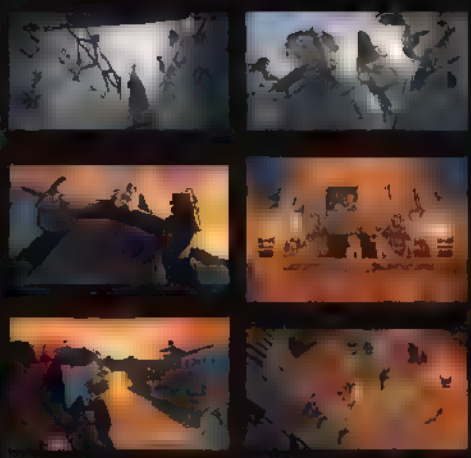
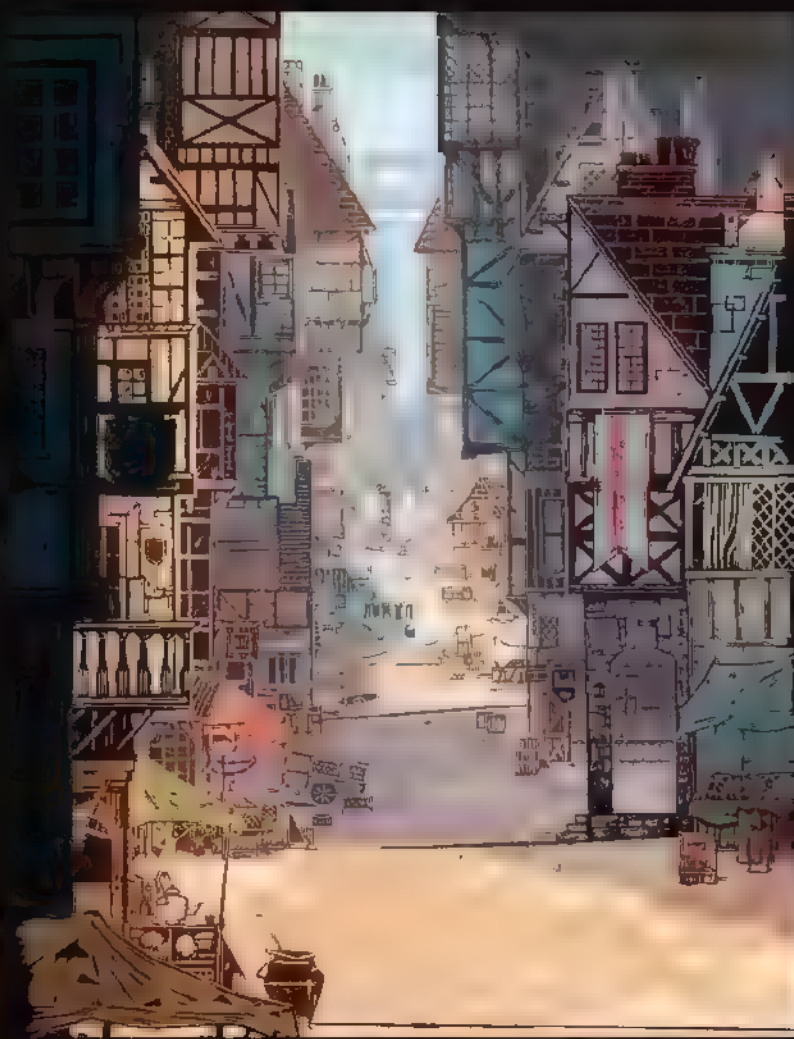
7



These five studies for the backgrounds capture the differing looks of the two worlds. The town (this page) is medieval, angular, and clearly organized. The countryside and patterns suggest chaos and chance. The forest (opposite) features curving forms that recall art nouveau and Celtic illumination.

- 1 Artist: Eduardo Damiánez
- 2 Artist: Blaise Bach
- 3 Artist: Chris Saville
- 4 Artist: Jean Baptiste Wadsworth
- 5 Artist: Alice D'Amore
- 6 Artist: Matti Rauhala
- 7 Artist: Mikko Luoma
- 8 Artist: Corina Rose Pasham
- 9 Artist: Camille Wagner
- 10 Artist: Magenta Wain
- 11 Artist: Laura Dong





Background paintings of the scene reflect the rectilinear style with its woodblock-inspired linework. The artists use perspective, design, and color to create a believable space that conveys a feeling of confinement and mass claustrophobia.

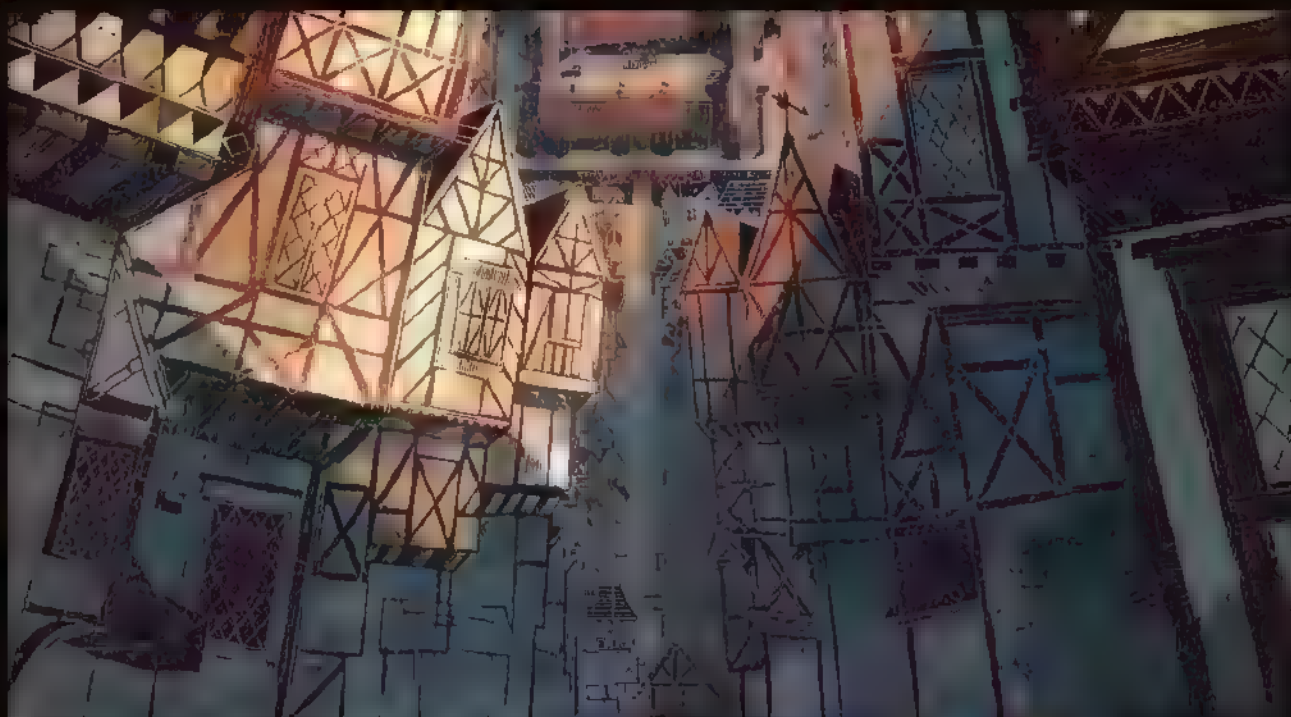
1 The stylization extends to the cut period atop the chimney at the upper right. Line by Clara Azeiteiro, color by Leandro Cardozo.

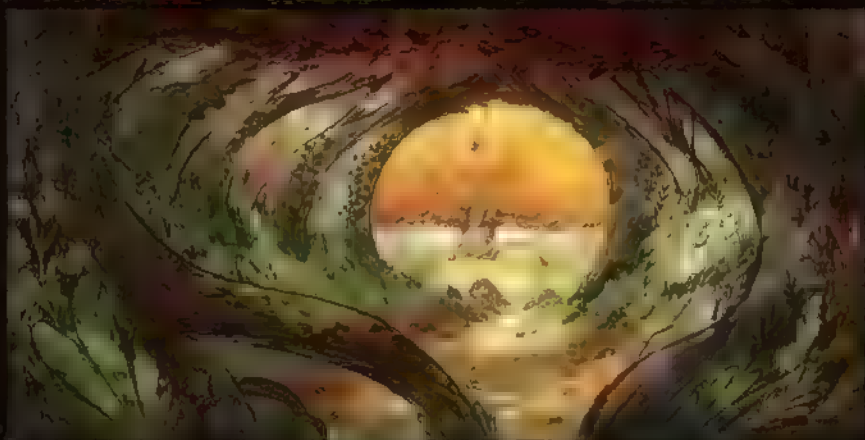
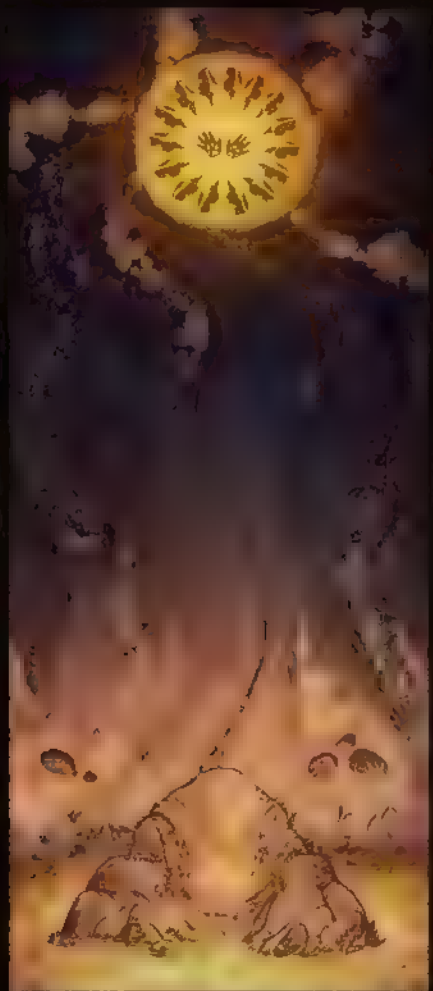
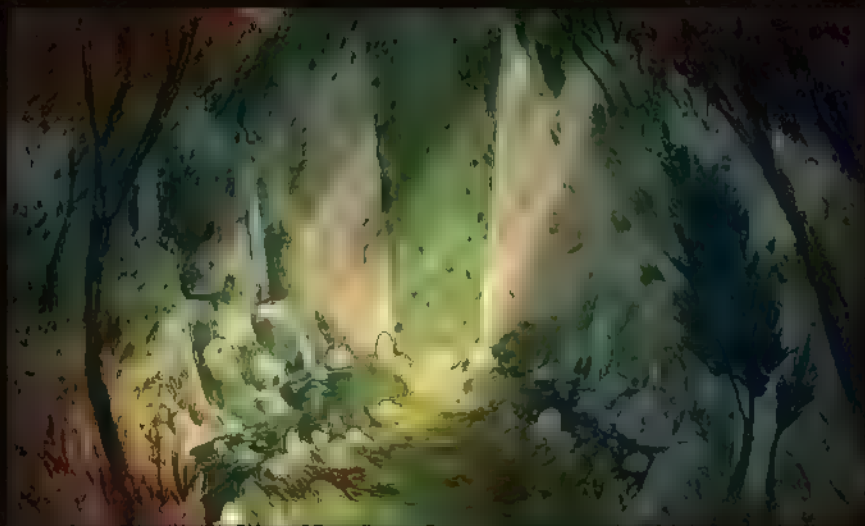
2 Sequences of color studies by color background supervisor Stefania Scapellato informed the background artists of the correct shading points for their scenes.

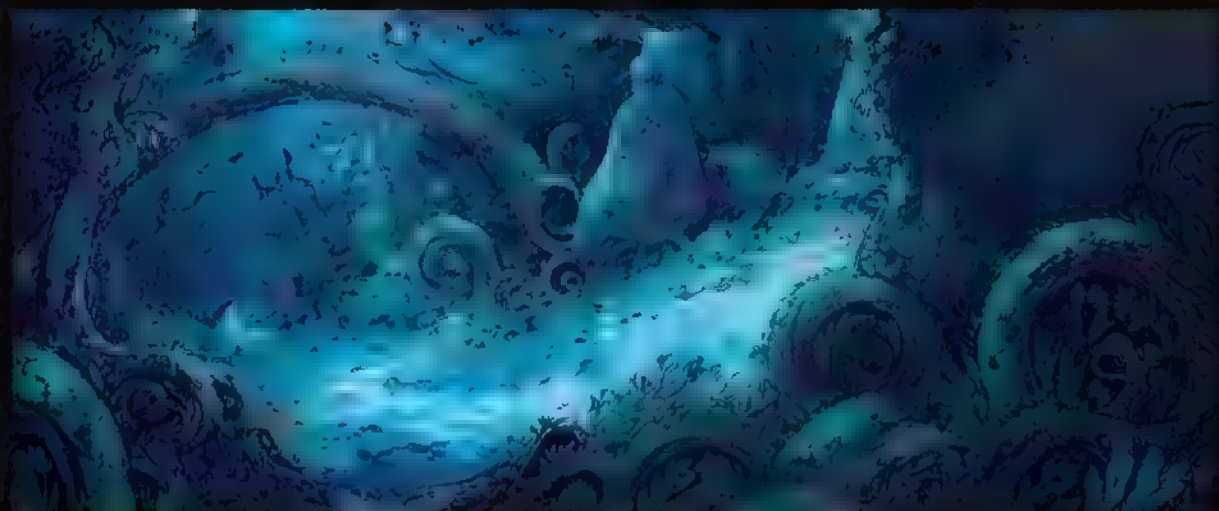
3 Line by Bruna Basso, color by Camilla Portinari.

4 Line by Clara Azeiteiro and Leonardo Domingues, color by Alvaro Rodondo.

5 Line by Merrill Fajardo and Eduardo Domingues, color by Alvaro Rodondo.







The swirling, organic forms and flow themselves seem to embrace the characters—and the viewer—without encumbering them. The green and orange palaces of the daytime scenes reflect the colours of an Irish forest in autumn.

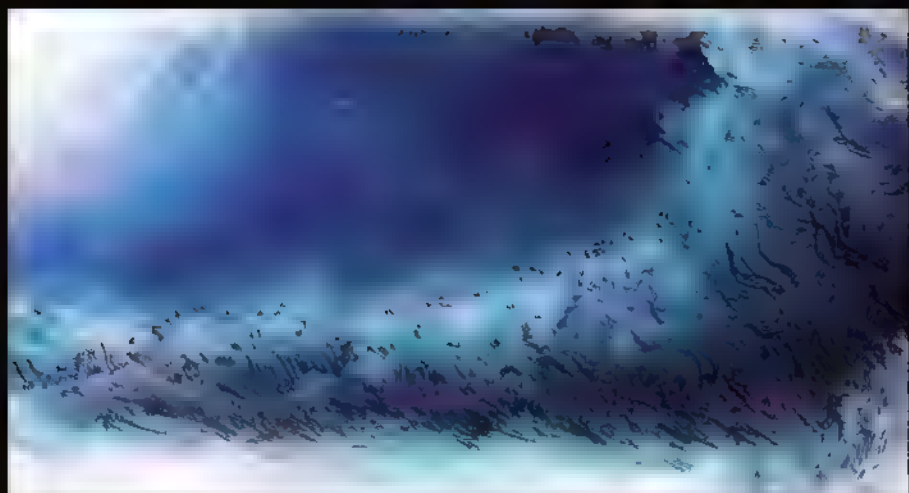
1. Line and colour by Ludo de Caillies.

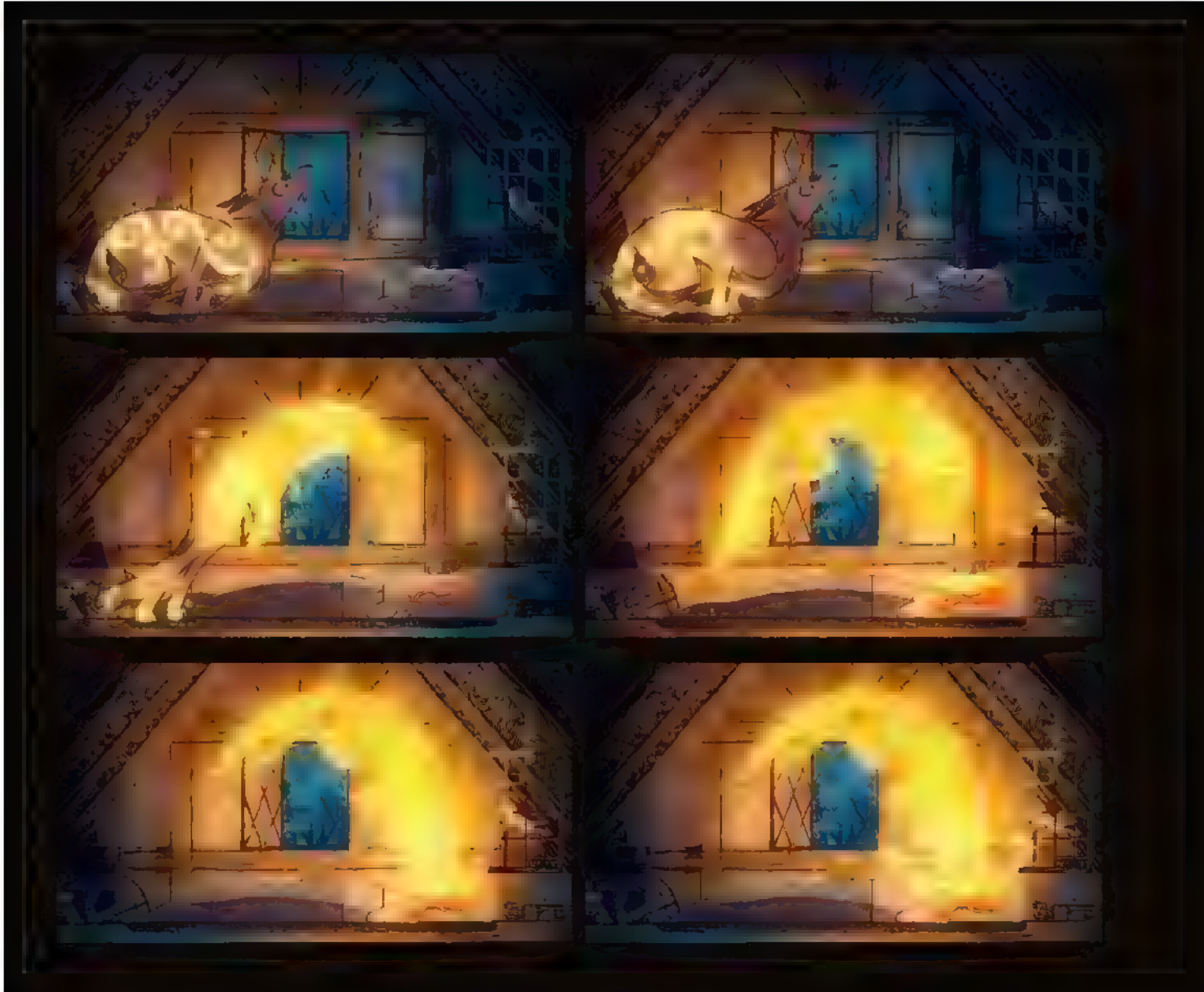
2. Line by Alice Desrosiers; colour by Anne-Marie and Stefano Scapellato.

3. Line by Emilio Bach; colour by Lawrence Corbett. **THE FAIRY** The lines, greens, and golds of the nighttime scenes suggest a magical realm where a shape-shifting character would find her home.

4. Line by Emilio Bach; colour by Norberto Morales and Stefano Scapellato.

5. Landscape colour by Maria Parilla.





VII. Animation

"Animators are usually by nature control freaks: We want what happens on screen to be what we would have done. Tomm has enough experience and enough perspective to allow the animators to bring their own ideas. It's rare and remarkable and makes him fantastic to work with. On *Wolfwalkers*, we had the opportunity to dig really deep and animate from inside the characters. We animated their feelings, rather than just moving them from A to B."

NICOLAS DEBRAY, ANIMATION
SUPERVISOR STUDIO 352

OPPOSITE *Reign's* spine, which has marked the streets and inspired a wolf returns in her body. Artist: Maria Pareja

Animation is an art form with principles but no rules. No textbook or class dictates how a girl will walk through a forest, with a fixed number of drawings for each step. Working from experience and observation, each animator imagines the girl in the forest and creates movements that reflect her personality, thoughts, emotions, and actions. The director must ensure the work of the individual animators blends into a seamless vision. Each artist has a part to play, but every part must be integrated into the story.

"Posing" is an important term in animation that's used in different ways. Some directors choose poses for the characters at key points in a scene. Tomm Moore would look for poses that clearly showed what the character was doing and thinking, telegraphing the essential points in the scene to the audience. A strong pose will read even in a silhouette.

Building on this idea, he introduced scene posing at Cartoon Saloon when he began work on the studio's first feature, *The Secret of Kells*. The animation was contracted to studios in several European countries and Brazil. To ensure a unified vision, he adapted an approach used at the Warner Bros. Studios for the hilarious *Looney Tunes* shorts in the 1940s and 1950s.

"Posing was something we started on *Kells* because we weren't sure how we were going to keep animation from studios scattered around Europe consistent," Moore says. "The poses are not the keys: The animators are free to change them. We looked at the way Chuck Jones posed out scenes. His animators might change the angle of a head, but Chuck's drawings controlled the overall shot."

To supervise the posing for *Wolfwalkers*, Tomm and Ross chose Andrzej Radka, an artist with thirty years of experience "because his draftsmanship gave the animators a really strong scaffold to build the performances on." By suggesting the key movements in each scene, the posing artists enable the directors to see how the finished scene will look before it's animated.

"Whenever I try to describe my position, people think my crew is doing the key poses for the animators, but we're not," says Radka. "We're translating the storyboards but with the right models, the right scale, the right backgrounds. We prepare all the information the animators need to start work. We try to give them poses they can use, although they don't have to follow them exactly."

It's a weird in-between of storyboard and animation: agrees lead posing artist Sandra Andersen. "Since we don't have an enormous budget, we have to work smart. Posing is like doing the keys for the scene. You have to understand the characters. You have to listen to the director. You have to make sure the character looks good and is consistently on model, so it's clear for whomever gets it next."

"When you had to show a character from an angle that didn't exist on the model sheet, the posing artists would do a drawing to help you," says Jeanne Sivivette Giraud, animation supervisor at Studio Fournier. "But we could draw around the poses. They weren't something we had to stick to exactly. They helped us understand what the character would look like in this position, from this angle. Once we understood that, we had some freedom."

Nicolas Debray, animation supervisor at Studio 352, adds, "When I hand a scene to an animator, I'd say, 'These poses have been approved by the director; work around them.' It saves a lot of time to begin with the right pose. It gives us a starting point, and a good animator can milk that pose."

Poses also play a key role in the animation itself. Most animation is done "pose to pose": Using drawings from the director and storyboard artists—and their own imaginations—the animators find the poses that express the key elements in the character's movements. Where do weight shifts and changes in balance occur? When is the character moving faster or slower? In a dialogue scene, which words are stressed? Other drawings link the poses to create fluid, believable movement.

Brad Bird, the director of *The Iron Giant*, visited master Disney animator Milt Kahle while he was working on *Madame Medusa* in *The Rescuers*. "He would fill a page with sketches of variations of one pose," Bird remembers. "They looked identical until you examined them closely; then you'd see a little, these little variations—in one, her shoulder would be a little higher; in another, a little lower. He was constantly searching for the clearest possible statement."

The films of Cartoon Saloon are noted for similar clarity in their stylized designs. During the 1950s, the artists at the LPA Studio were inspired by the work of Picasso, Matisse, Modigliani, Saul Steinberg, and other contemporary artists. They discovered that stylized, two-dimensional figures couldn't move in three-dimensional space the way the rounded figures in a Disney film could. Their movements had to be as stylized as their designs. These discoveries influenced artists from Marcel Jankovics (*Son of the White Mare*) to Genady Tarkovskiy (*Sennost*), both of whom Moore cites as influences.

"We think about the movements and avoid difficult turns of the head, which could look confusing because of the flatness of the image," Radka explains. "Each character has special rules about moving, acting, and drawing. Whenever I think about posing a scene, I try to explain it with two or three drawings. It's easy for slow dialogue scenes, but with action, it can get complicated. I always try to think as an animator: What would I need to start the scene?"

"We're taking the essence of the storyboards and layouts, figuring out what's needed for the scene, then giving the animators the right poses," adds Andersen. "In the beginning, we did a lot of posing—maybe a bit too much—because the animators were new to the characters. Later, we tried to do as few poses as needed."

"I think everybody had an easier time with Mebb than Robyn," she continues. "Robyn is very skinny. She has a big forehead, so she's difficult to turn around in space. Mebb is more like a ball, with a triangle for a body and a lot of hair. She's practically a line of action, which is much easier to understand."

Moore describes the posing department "as a sort of funnel. You have fewer people who specialize in design doing the posing, so the animators can focus on the performances."

Rough animation supervisor Svend Rothmann-Bonde helps to coordinate the scene posing and animation departments. "I'm in the meetings where they lock off each sequence in posing, where we talk about what's needed for the animation. The posing team has been creating a lot of material for the animators to work from. We want to find that balance for the animators, not giving them too much so they feel like they're just in between those poses."

Bonde held weekly Skype meetings with the supervisors at Fourvar and Studio 152. He and the directors visited those studios to ensure consistency and boost morale. Although the animators in Luxembourg and France might not have felt the same ties to the story as the Irish artists, they all recognized the film's potential.

"For me, it goes beyond the geographical ties," says Debray. "It's a good story with great characters. What I really appreciated about *Wolfwalkers* was the depth of feeling and the layering of emotions within the scenes. I've probably had the most fun in my whole career with some of the scenes, especially the ones between Bill and Robyn. Bill is angry, but he's angry because he's scared for her, then he mellows down throughout the scene. For an animator, that's gold, something you can't wait to dive into."

In traditional 2-D animation, the animators will do the key drawings in a scene, then pass it on to assistants who do the "in-between" drawings, ensuring fluid, consistent motion. The director must decide which artists should animate a given character. It's less a question of which artist is "better" than whose work conveys the feeling the story requires. Some animators specialize in heroes or heroines, others in comic characters or animals. In some studios, a single animator is cast as a lead and oversees all of one character's scenes. In others, the director assigns the animation by shot, and each animator works with all the characters in the scene.

"We work by scene," says Bonde. "The animation team is split up over three studios in three different places, but we have animators who are very good at animating wolves, we have people who are very good at animating Bill, and so on. So we cast, but we didn't really set up one team for Robyn, one team for Mebb."

"Sometimes on longer performance shots, we'll have one animator rough it all out, then keep going on one character and have someone else do the other," adds Stewart. "But most of the time the animators do the whole scene themselves. We assign it based on their skills. Anita Gaughan and Geoff King are very good at quadrupeds. Mathilde Vachet and Diane Coat are very sensitive in their animation of the girls, so we tried to give them those scenes. We tend to give more of the Mebb scenes to Mathilde, and ask Emmanuel Asquier to do the more complex mixes of effects and character."

"We struggled with the design of the wolves because they felt constrained, and we wanted something wild and loose," he continues. "When Federico [Pirovano, character designer, started drawing them, they felt free and loose with exactly the energy we wanted."

"I was coasting along, doing what we've done before on the wolf designs until Federico brought us his take," replies Moore. "It helps

"I try to deepen the characters, to give them life. What we have is just a drawing and a script, but through good timing and good poses and expressions, we can give the characters real emotions and a real life."

ANDRZEJ RADKA,
POSING SUPERVISOR



ABOVE A drawing of Mebb, with the lead illuminationist artist, Søren Højmark.

OPPOSITE TOP LEFT STYLING THE relationships among the characters.

1-2 Bill also starts but loving father to Robyn. Art: Anne-Gaël.

3-4 The last Prey. Character designer, Federico Pirovano.

5 Robyn and Mebb's friendship has a fractious warmth. Artist: Anne-Gaël.

6 Bill as an off-mocking maternal figure. Artist: Søren Andersen.



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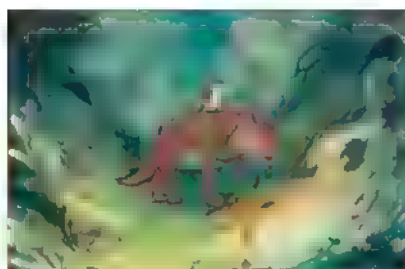
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"If the effects are well done, no one is going to see them. But if they're badly done, everyone is going to notice them. It's kind of sad: If it's well done, nobody's going to know."

ANDREJ CAMPOS
ANIMATION FX SUPERVISOR



with the storytelling that there's a different kind of animation for the wild creatures. Conversely, we lean more on clockwork-like poses to animate the soldiers. There are different animation styles for the different characters."

One major challenge the film presented was keeping Robyn and Mebh consistent in both their human and wolf forms. "It was a long process to find the right version of a wolf for each girl, so there would be no doubt you were seeing the same character," explains Radica. "Robyn is an educated girl from a good family, with manners. So, as a wolf, she has a more aristocratic way of moving, while Mebh is a wild thing. Tomm says she's somewhere between a crazy squirrel and a little girl. So she moves with much more energy."

"We handled part of the sequence in which Robyn becomes a wolf for the first time," says Graud. "She didn't feel at ease in this new body. Sometimes she'd pump and miss her landing. She suddenly goes from being a human child to having very long, slender legs and tiny feet that make her movements awkward at times. She can't move her legs the way a truly wild creature would."

Bonde notes, "As Robyn is more contained as a human, when she's a wolf, she's also a little more contained a little clumsier. Whereas Mebh is this kind of arms spread, running around being goofy figure. We're trying as much as we can to connect the wolf characters with their human counterparts. There were some moments where we had Robyn behave too much like a boy, like Brendan or Ben. It was definitely something we needed to think about."

"It was a challenge, but I think that's what makes animators animators," agrees Debray. "An actor is stuck with what he looks like. We can be whatever we want... I did the sequence of the two girls speaking under the tree. I have to brag, but having them wag their tails was my idea. I put it in and thought, 'Maybe Tomm's going to hate me for this. If he does, we can get rid of it.' But he loved it, and we found it helped

us connect with the characters. It started pretty timidly, then went further and further with the canine aspects of the movements. All the little things that make them feel like they're wolves, but also like girls."

The directors carefully oversaw the performances of the major and minor—characters. Bonde continues, "Tomm and Ross are very very involved. Every day we have reviews, which last from five minutes to an hour. They'll comment on anything from broad aspects of a shot to little details. But the focus is the emotion, the acting."

The flattened graphic designs can pose challenges for the animators. But, Graud notes, "The design of a character suggests the way that character will move. The lines in Bill's design are strong, solid, and straight. You know from the design there's a rigidity in the way he moves, it allows you to show the very tight control he keeps over himself. But when he gets emotional, he moves much more freely, which shows something is happening internally. In contrast, Mebh's design is so round, as soon as you see it, you know you can stretch and squash and go for a very cartoony style of animation—which was exactly what the director wanted."

"Tomm and Ross are very focused on silhouette and clarity," Bonde adds. "These designs help because they're so clear. We've found the easiest approach is to let the animators animate the characters without thinking too much about the graphics. Afterward, they can go in and flatten things. It gives us a result that feels volumetric but still true to the design. It's challenging, but it's also what makes hand-drawn interesting. You can play with these things and cheat a lot. Like Mickey Mouse's ears, which appear round no matter which way he turns his head."

Whether using a pencil or paper or a stylus on a digital table, no two animators draw the same way. One artist draws loose, scribbly forms; another uses light strokes to form a few delicate lines. But the drawings must all look the same in the finished film. Once the

ABOVE Mebh performs the same movement as a wolf, but as a human, she's stiff.

OPPOSITE The different styles of animation divide the natural world of the forest and the human world of the town.

1 Water splashes from a bucket in Kuberay forms opposite—Artist: Maria Perez

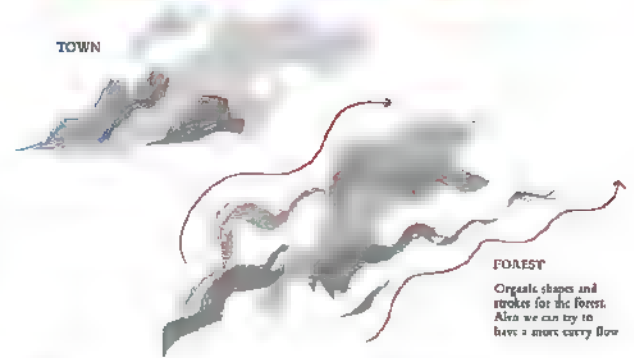
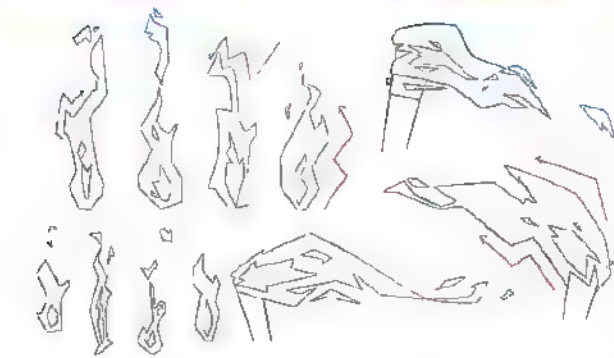
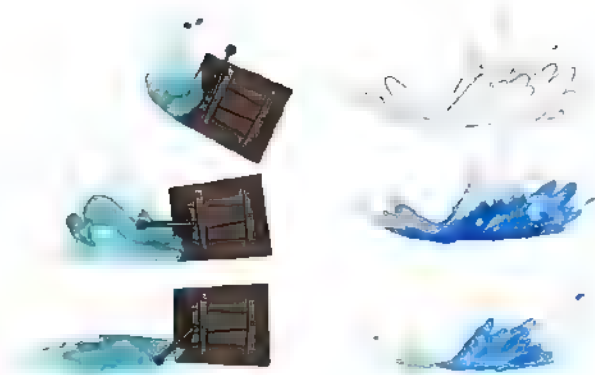
2 When Robyn and Mebh splash around in a lake, their movements are very different—Artist: Maria Perez

3 A dramatic study of Lord Protector confronting a wolf, before huge waterfall—Artist: Maria Perez

4 As fire is generated by humans, the flames burn in a regular pattern—Artist: Maria Perez

5 Smoke takes on more organic, curving shapes as it moves through the forest—Artist: Maria Perez

6 Mebh and Robyn play amid leaves, but Robyn is stiff—Artist: Maria Perez

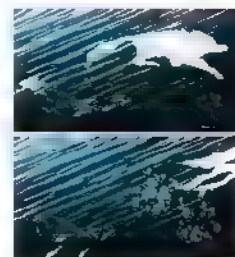


rough animation has been approved. It's sent to clean-up, where artists trace the roughs using neat, single lines. If Mebh has three leaves over her left ear in a scene, the clean-up artists make sure those leaves are in the exact same place in every drawing, even when she turns her head. Giraud praises the clean-up crew for the "amazing work they did with this unique, demanding style of design." "We concentrate on those strong, key poses. Once you've got strong keys all the way through, you can get away with certain things in between," says clean-up animation supervisor John Walsh. All the artists agree that *Wolfwalkers* is a challenging, visually complicated film. Walsh continues, "It all comes down to the complexity of the scenes. You've got packs of wolves—there could be fifteen, twenty wolves, plus the main characters. It took a long time at the beginning, but later, even sequences with a lot of wolves got through pretty quickly." Each character presents special challenges. As clean-up animation lead Tatiana Mazzei observes, "Bill has all those straight lines. Mebh is like a little ball, and you can be more cartoony with her. Her face will deform with her expressions. But Merlyn, Robyn's falcon! Because the way his wings work as he flies, some in-betweens can be tricky." Directors of traditionally animated films have avoided crowd scenes because so much time, effort, and money is required to draw so many figures. *Wolfwalkers* includes not only Moll's wolf pack, but also people in the streets and markets of Kilkenny. "It's a lot of work, although not all the characters are moving all the time," says Mazzei. "You try to keep movement to a certain level that's not a crazy amount of animation. The pack of wolves was harder. They move all the time because they're animals." "For me, this is one of the most complicated productions ever," adds Radka. "There are lots of crowd scenes. The animators have to animate the main characters, but don't have to care about the crowds. Some sequences were really, really hard." Not every animator works with human and animal movements. Some artists create special effects: water, snow, falling leaves, smoke, and so on. *Wolfwalkers* required a lot of effects. "I focus more on the flow of the animation and its energy," says animation FX supervisor Andreu Campos. "Cartoon Saloon uses graphic designs that can be very tricky. I can animate the designs now, but it was a challenge at the beginning of the production." Campos cites Robyn cleaning the Lord Protector's headquarters as an example of the complexity that underlies an apparently simple scene. "When Robyn is mopping the floor, the mop is moving around and it's moving the water. That water has to match the background

also has to respond to the physical elements of the floor and react to the girl's motions with her mop. That's the work of the effects artist." "It's especially challenging to integrate a character with water—or with any background," adds effects lead Nanissa Schander. "You don't want it to look like the character's pasted on top. You need to feel like it's in its environment." "Say a wolf has been animated swimming underwater," continues Campos. "When the wolf moves its leg, it's going to produce bubbles behind the feet—it's essentially crawling through the water. The animator has to animate those bubbles based on references and his own intuition. The physics make the animation look real, but we always break the rules a little to match the style." Tomm and Ross wanted the effects to match the stylized designs of the film, including the visual dichotomy between Kilkenny and the forest. "They want really sharp, angular shapes for the fire, but if you look at a fire in the fireplace, it's quite curvy-looking," comments Schander. "You have to make it move the same way, but you have to stylize it and make it more angular. You might do rough animation where it's curvier, then choose where you sharpen the lines—making sure it still reads as fire." Campos adds, "There's a moment in the movie where the forest is burning. We have two kinds of smoke: angular town-style smoke and rounded forest-style smoke. But when the location is the forest and the fire is set by the townsfolk, we mix them. So it's two kinds of smoke because we are combining these different worlds in the same scene." Effects artists can study reference footage of fire, water, and other natural phenomena to understand how they move in the real world. Magic effects pose a different set of problems. "[Co-art director] Maria Pareja did illustrations to help us with the look of the water, fire, etc. How to make something move like fire is our work," says Campos. "The problems come when the directors ask for something that breaks the rules of physics, like magic. Magic is more subjective and more about what the director wants." "There's no reference for magic, which makes it really fun to do," adds Schander. "You get to create your own physics and your own rules. There need to be rules about how it moves or everyone would do their own version and it wouldn't be consistent. It's very organic, since the magic comes from the wolves." "Tomm and Ross want every frame to be worthy of printing out and hanging on the wall. Every frame has to look like a work of art," she concludes. "We get to be super expressive with the effects. We get to try different textures to get the scene to look even more amazing. You don't get to do that on just any job."

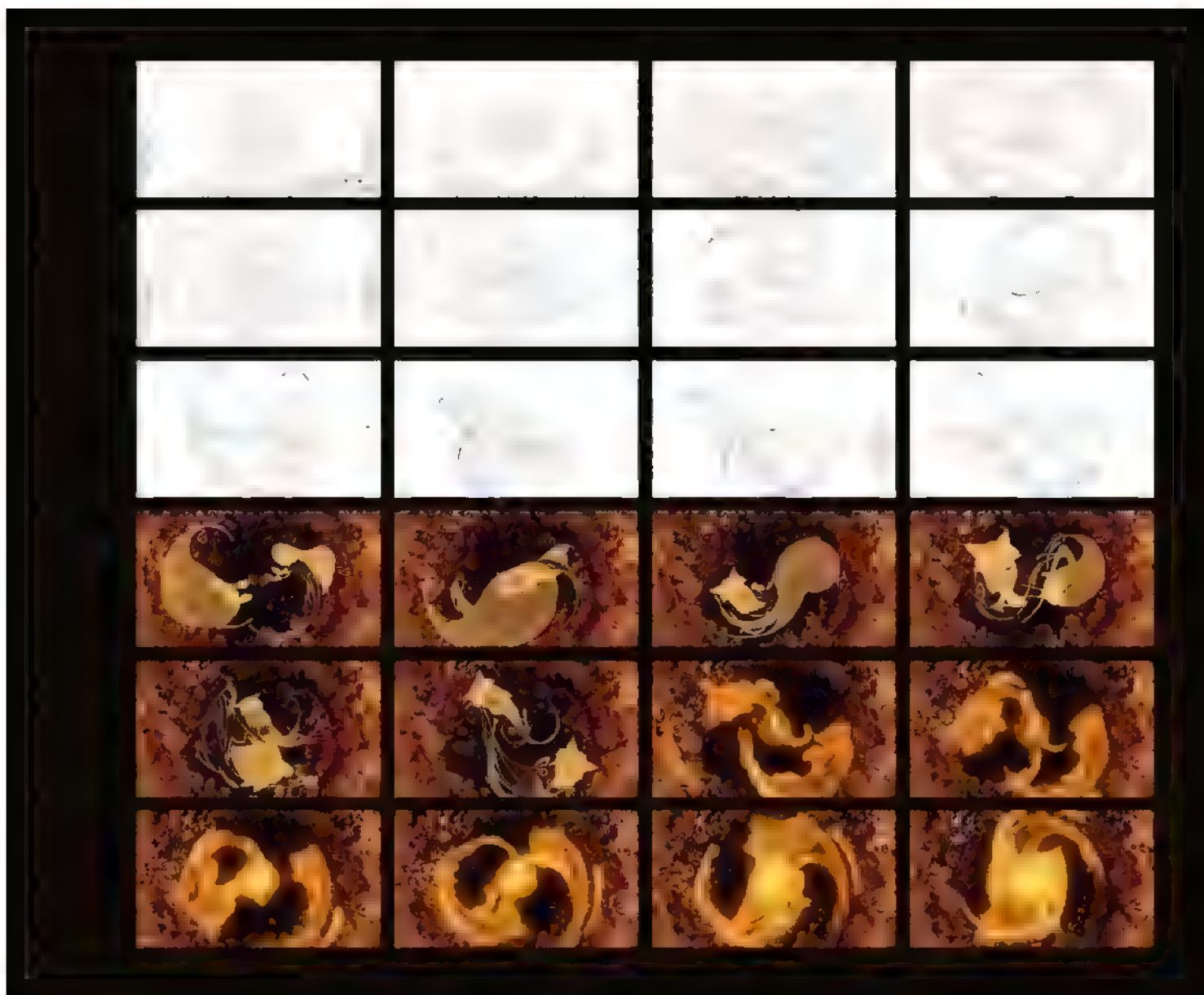
"It's very important for me to have a part in putting the team together: not just looking at people's skills, but also at how people communicate and how the team is functioning. The more people communicate within the team and across departments the better the results. Not only will the animation be more consistent, but having a nice atmosphere is important. They have a good sense of community here."

SVEND ROTTMANN BONDE
ROUGH ANIMATION SUPERVISOR



ABOVE: A few illustrations of Robyn swimming underwater, various poses.

OPPOSITE: The magical themes of the film involved input from every department. Emmanuel Auguer, character lead, with his integration of character and effects animation, which was piloted by other effects animators and the ink and paint and compositing departments. Concept images using pencils by Emmanuel. By Maria Pareja.





WOLFVISION

When Robyn transitions from a human girl to a Whitebacker, Moore and Stewart felt it wasn't enough, just to show changes in her appearance. To understand what she was experiencing, the audience had to see the transformation through her eyes.

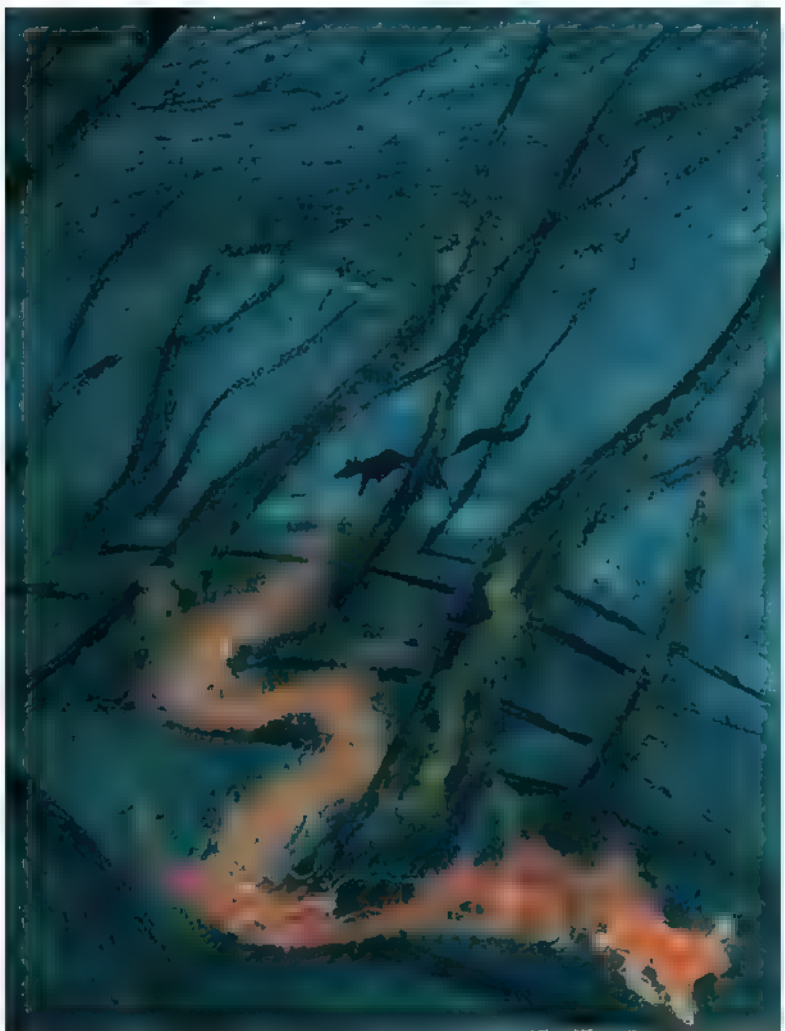
"In this film, you have two worlds side by side: the world of the Purikans and the world of the wolves. The two walkers thread between them," says Eimhin McMahon, Wolfvision department head. "We wanted to show the differences in how humans perceive things versus wolves. We wanted Wolfvision to feel immersive as if you're looking through Robyn's eyes."

A wolf's perception of the world is very different from a human's because it's built on different senses. Research indicates that a wolf's sense of smell is about one hundred times more powerful than a human's. Wolves identify pack members and potential enemies by smell; when they scent prey animals, they chase them down. Hearing is also important. Wolves can detect sounds generated six miles away in a forest, and even farther away in open country.

"We began that wolves see a more muted spectrum of colour than we do. They almost see the world in black and white," Moore explains. "We thought they would see the muted colour with the rest of the world in black and white. If we did a pencil/charcoal render for the environments and an muted them, the scents would have colour and a glow to them, so we would see how different the world appears to the wolves when they become wolves."

We worked into the plot that the wolves can tell whenever the army is marching in to their part of the forest. The content notes "Robyn feels the vibrations through her paws, and she senses they have a canyon. The wolves have advantages as we were trying to show those advantages through this different-looking technique that drawn on paper. We felt it took as much like paper and pencil as we could."

"Wolfvision has a 3D grant requirement, but everything that appears on-screen has been rendered over on paper," emphasizes assistant director Mark Mulvey. "I wanted to make the film look as much like a drawing on top of a painting as possible. I didn't ever want the audience to think, 'Here comes the CG.' A pet peeve of mine is when something that looks like CG appears in a drawn movie. My taste is incredibly Puritanical, way. You're trying to get a unified image."





OPPOSITE Colour and atmospheric images suggest how a well-mighty rabbit tracks a rabbit by its coat. ARISTO CATINAROSA character by Ross Stewart

ABOVE A still from the film 'The Cat in the Hat: The Great Game' showing the Cat in the Hat standing in a dark, stylized environment with a glowing blue light source behind him.

"We thought there should also be a three-dimensionality to this world," adds Stewart. "You're completely thrown out of the world of humans, where we play with a flattened perspective in the town. Even in the forest, the look is quadratic and pattern-y, then suddenly you're thrust into this deep, deep world where things move in true perspective. Everything is alive."

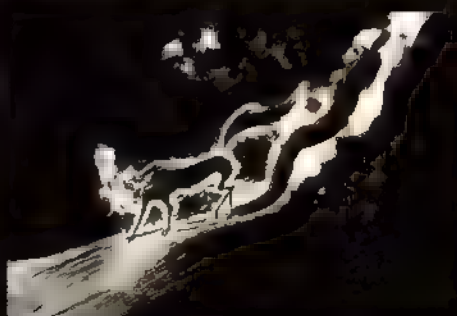
As inspiration, the Cartoon Saloon artists cite an Oscar-winning short by Richard Williams: "We wanted it to look like the animated backgrounds in *A Christmas Carol*," says Moore. "It's the most hand-drawn part of the film because it's all on paper."

But what does a scent look like? How can it be represented visually on the screen? "One reason Tomm and Ross asked me in was they weren't really sure how they wanted it to look, but they knew they wanted it to look cool," McManis said. "Because we did a lot of R&D, it was a long development process. It was maybe six months before we had a shot."

A lot of times the scent is used as a lure for action. Robyn or Mebh are following something or pick up someone's scent and try to figure out where it's coming from," he explains. "It's like a trail weaving through the woods or the city that the characters follow. It's a glow and depending on its origin, it's different colours: yellow, gold, or cold colours for the urban elements and people."

The Wolfvision sequences proved technically and visually challenging. They had to stand out from the rest of the film, yet still feel like they belonged in the same world. They also had to contribute to the story.

"We wanted to make it the roller coaster in the film," Stewart concludes. "We used fly-throughs of 3-D environments, but incorporated elements of the backgrounds and hand-drawn textures. We get the effect of a light pulsing through all the background elements. When we saw it in the review room, we all said, 'That's exactly it. That will make people go, 'Whoa. What's this?'"



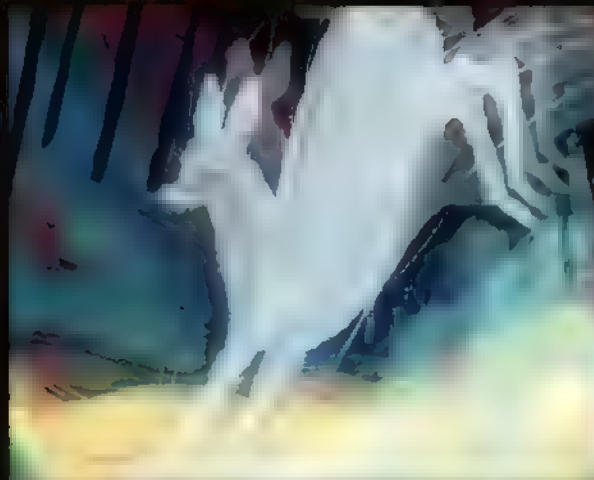
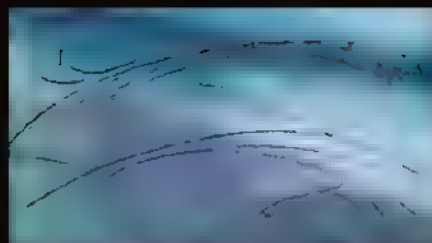
"Wolfvision footage only makes up about three minutes, but it adds so much to Robyn's story. She couldn't go back to her normal, flat life once she's experienced the true, instinctive life of a wolf. Wolfvision is really successful at portraying that. It's a completely different world."

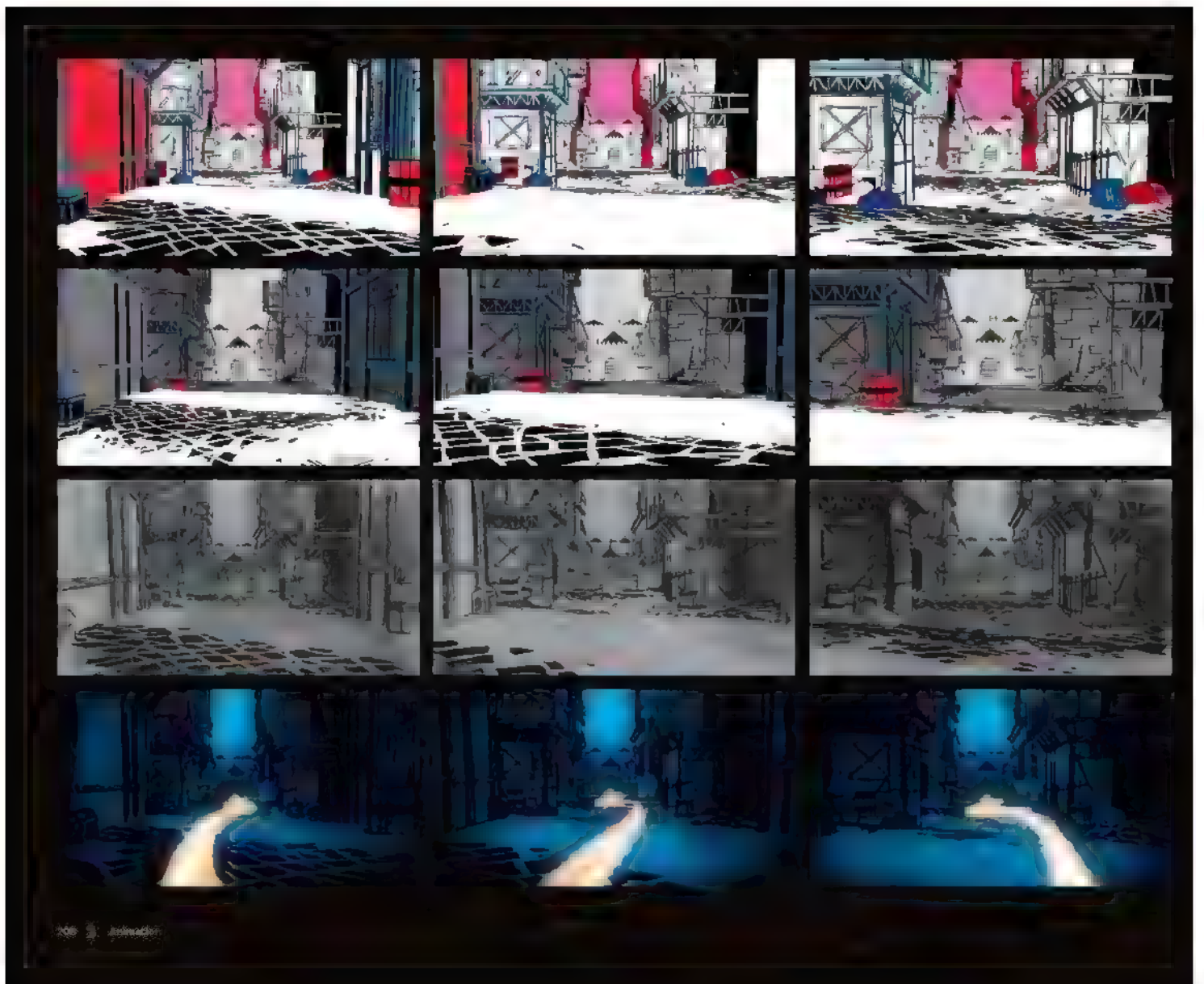
ROSS STEWART
CO-DIRECTOR

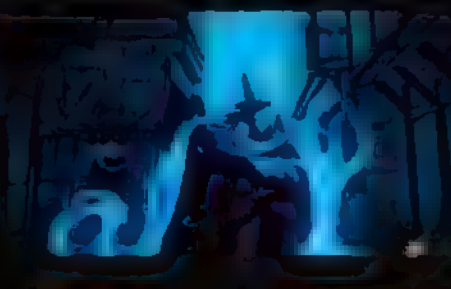
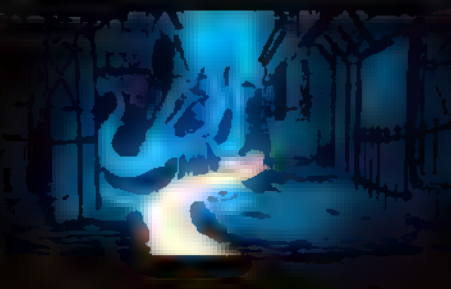
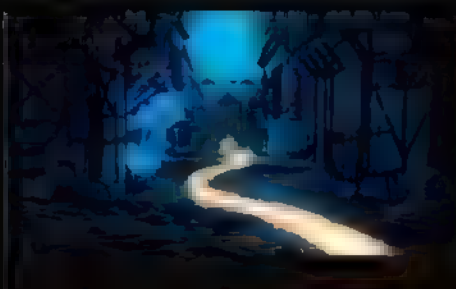
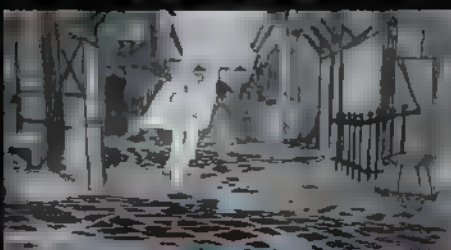
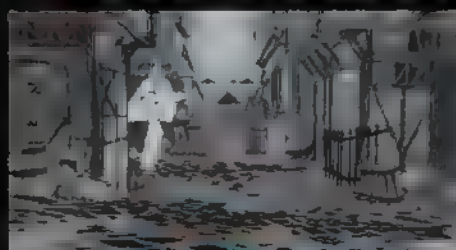
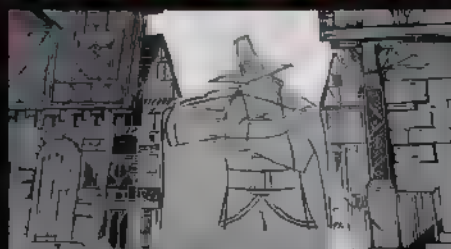
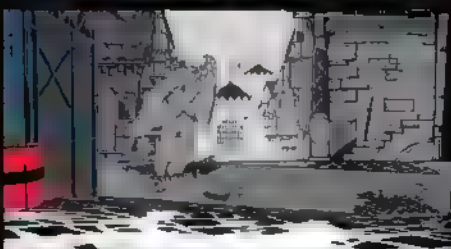
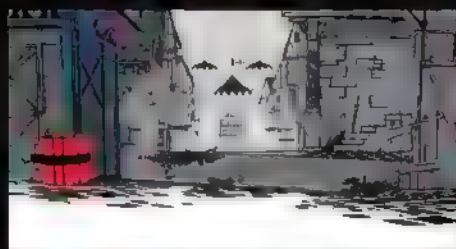
Wolfvision takes the audience to a place they've never experienced: a human girl's discovery of how wolves perceive people, places, and animals.

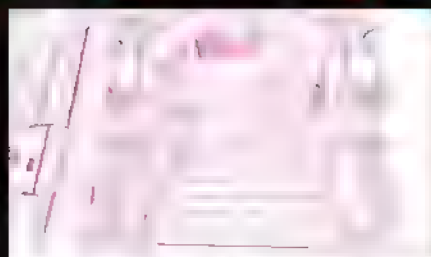
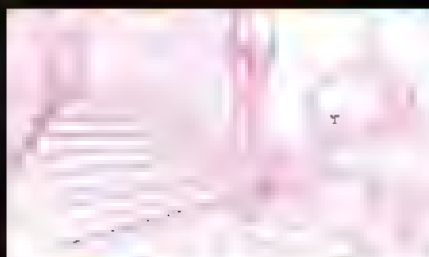
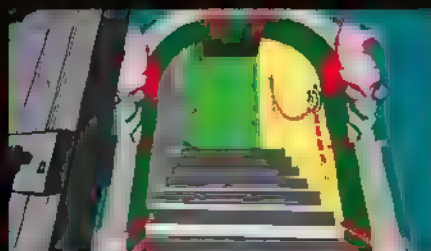
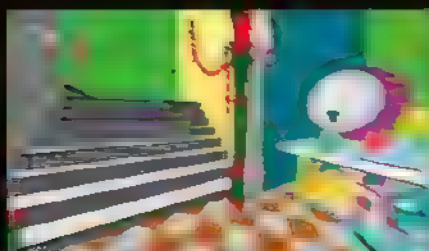
- 1 Artist: Cyril Pedrosa
- 2 Artist: Flora Taverney
- 3 Artist: Friedrich Schöper
- 4 Artist: Flora Taverney

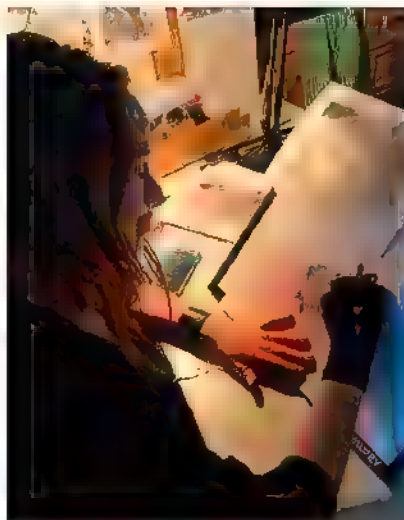
FOLLOWING SPREAD Wolfvision lead Elmhin McNamara created a previsualisation camera move through the initial lines of the town of Killeeney. The Wolfvision artists painstakingly rendered each frame with peace and charm to create an immersive fly-through of Robyn's run that powered the look of Wolfvision. The layouts by Clara Avello, rendering by Kedon McLeod and Elmhin McNamara.



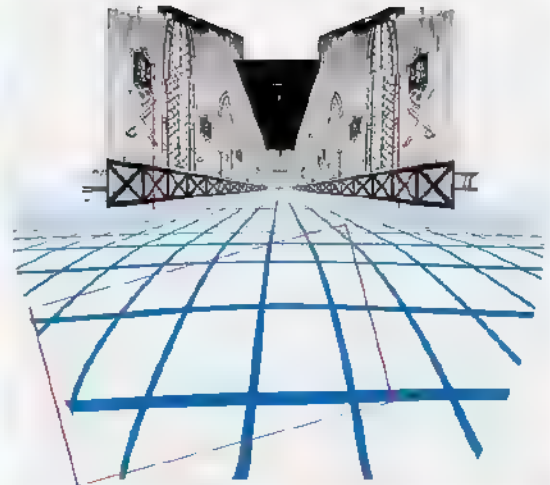








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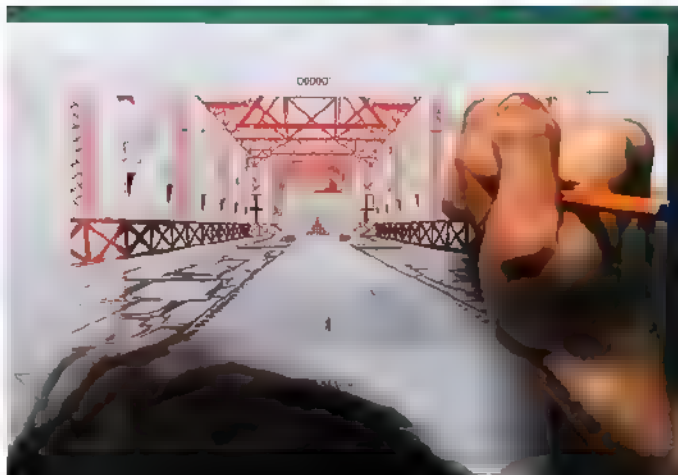
OPPOSITE Tadahito Mochimaru built a CG version of the gallery, adding the trail of Moll's path for the previsualization camera move and the pre-render of the scene in pencil and graphite. The scent trail was rendered on paper by FX artist Jeremy Laatsch.

1 Laurence Riese-Jordan renders one of the pages for the Wolfvision sequence.

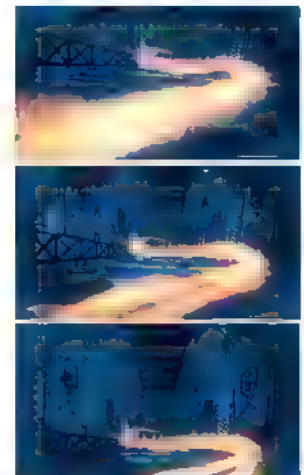
2 A CG setup by Tadahito Mochimaru of the original director's headquarters. The red rectangles indicate the position of the camera.

3 Tadahito Mochimaru renders in pencil over a printout of the camera previsualization.

4 The completed scene with Moll's scent as gold against the blue nighttime background.



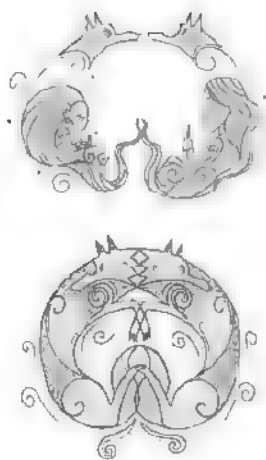
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VIII. Music



OPPOSITE The members of the Irish band Kila were surprised to find themselves caricatured or referenced in the movie. Above: Ross O'Snodaigh, Brian Hagan, Rónán O'Snodaigh. Below: Animations of the band members.

ABOVE Melk and Robyn transform into wolves in these stylized drawings. Artists: Siobhán Hannigan

Animation has been closely linked to music for more than a century. Silent cartoons had scores that were performed by theater orchestras and organists. Paul Hindemith wrote the music (now lost) for a Felix the Cat cartoon: *The Skeleton Dance* (1929). Walt Disney's first "Silly Symphony," was conceived as a graveyard romp set to Edvard Grieg's "March of the Dwarfs." To produce the artificially created sound for his Oscar-winning short *Neighbours* (1952), Norman McLaren drew the tiny lines the exciter lamp on a projector "read." JPA director Bobe Cannon animated to music in an effort to infuse his drawings with its rhythms.

Many memorable scenes in animated features—from Satsuki and Mei waiting for their father in *My Neighbor Totoro*, to Remy learning to manipulate linguini like a puppet in *Ratatouille*, to Aang bewitching Pangu Barr in *The Secret of Kells*—involve actions set to music or a song, with little or no dialogue. Some artists compare animation to ballet, as both arts involve choreographing movement through time and space to present a story.

For *The Secret of Kells* and *Song of the Sea*, Tomm Moore drew on Irish folklore and art history—and traditional Irish music. Both films included music by Kila. Band member Colm O'Snodaigh recalls, "Back around 1990, we played in Kilkenny and Tomm, Ross and Paul from Cartoon Saloon came down. They said they really liked our music, that they were working on the script for a film and that they would love for us to be involved. The script became *The Secret of Kells*."

Kells producer Didier Brunner suggested adding composer Bruno Coulais to the team. They had worked together on Danish animator Jannik Hastrup's *The Boy Who Wanted to Be a Bear* (2002).

"We had imagined that we'd just work with Kila on the music, Didier felt Kila was great, but that we needed a composer," Moore explains. "He thought Bruno would be a good choice because he works so much with indigenous singers and traditional musicians.

Bruno came over to Kilkenny to visit the studio and met with the guys from Kila. We took him to a pub for some traditional music, and kind of wooed him. He agreed to do it, which was great."

Over the years, the artists and musicians have developed an increasingly collaborative working relationship. Moore adds, "For *The Secret of Kells*, Bruno came in at the beginning of animation. We hadn't quite locked the animatic, so we asked him to write music for certain parts that we could animate to—especially Aang's song and some of the action sequences. But on *Song of the Sea*, he was involved in the writing. We were going to have a flashback of the mother, but Bruno said we could get the effect by just layering her voice into the soundtrack. The process continued on *Wolfwalkers* because he and Kila get on so well. We started talking while we were writing the script.

"*Wolfwalkers* was designed to be the culmination of ideas and themes we began developing in our previous films, not only visually but also musically," he continues. "The musical style of Bruno and Kila has become synonymous with our work. Like the visuals, this score is the richest yet, with orchestras, choir, and traditional instruments all layered together. The trusting relationship we've built over the years enabled us to pull it off. We recorded the orchestra in Bulgaria again and Kila in Grouse Lodge in Ireland where we also recorded the voices. It was a magical and collaborative experience."

O'Snodaigh adds, "Before the script is written, there's a meeting where we discuss the rhythms and other elements. Things can be as simple as Ross or Tomm sending a clip and saying, 'We need something here.' Bruno comes to Ireland, and we layer stuff onto the score."

"For animated movies, the process is very long, and I want to start early," Coulais comments. "I watch the animatic and start to compose little by little until the end of the movie. I write my own



orchestrations, so I need to know the colours and moods of the film I do the orchestrations at the end of the process."

Like the visuals and the story, the music for *Wolfwalkers* grew out of a collaboration that is informal, friendly, and respectful. Ross, Stewart, Moore, O'Snodagh, and Coulais met, discussed, and made suggestions. Some ideas were immediately accepted; others required refining. Inevitably, others proved dead ends. "The visual style we've developed and Bruno's signature sound and Kila's sound all feed each other," says Moore. "Even as we conceive the story, we're imagining what they'll contribute. The music is really important."

Cartoon Saloon is an amazing place to be when we're all digging in together and ideas are flying," replies O'Snodagh. "Everybody is a hundred percent open to any idea. Every idea is listened to and considered. You know when an idea works and when it doesn't. It is a really wonderful process to be involved in."

"I have to absorb an awful lot, then respond later. It seems to come out three or four days later," he explains. "I have my tape recorder and start throwing ideas on it. Some work, some don't. It is very organic, especially with Tomm and Ross. I can do something, hand it to them, and say, 'Are we on the right track?' We move on from there."

"It's very important for me to work within the chronology of the story," adds Coulais. "I send the first demo for Ross and Tomm and await their reactions. After we discuss things, the timing of the music becomes more precise."

"In an animated film, you are not in a realistic world, so the music has more importance: its placement, its structure, its timing," he continues. "You have a lot of music in an animated movie, and the music almost becomes another character. There should be an organic correspondence between the music and the film."

The artists agreed they wanted certain links between the music and the characters, but they didn't want a one-on-one correspondence like Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*. "I have some themes or short melodies. For the girl, it's a very simple motif, strange but strong," Coulais says. "For the Lord Protector Tomm and Ross wanted to hear the double bass. We have to be very careful, so when you see a character on the screen you won't always hear the same themes or the same instruments. I don't like it when the music cleaves too closely to the story or the characters. For me, the music is a counterpoint that reveals secrets within the film."

The music for *Wolfwalkers* also reflects the dichotomy between the town and the forest, as Coulais notes. "There are some contrasts between the two worlds of the film in the score. For me, the forest evokes a more mysterious, more magical realm. The city is a place of confinement, while the forest is open space."

"The intensity of the drumming in the forest was really important for me. It's not frantic, it's intense," O'Snodagh adds. "We tried to come up with as many different sounds as possible, sounds that are not necessarily of the time but may evoke the time. You want to





"For me *Wolfwalkers* is a film about metamorphosis. I tried to use the music to suggest this metamorphosis. The girl's transformation into a wolf was very interesting to orchestrate: It's represented by shifts in timbres, the instrumentation, and the voices. I really love this film."

BRIND COULAIS, COMPOSER

OPPOSITE TOP LEFT Left: *Wolfwalkers* (2020) by Tomm Moore. Right: *Wolfwalkers* (2020) by Tomm Moore. Photos by Jean-Pierre Arqui.

OPPOSITE TOP RIGHT *Wolfwalkers* (2020) by Tomm Moore. Photo by Jean-Pierre Arqui.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM *Wolfwalkers* (2020) by Tomm Moore. Photo by Jean-Pierre Arqui.

THIS PAGE *Wolfwalkers* (2020) by Tomm Moore. Photo by Jean-Pierre Arqui.

create a feeling. It might come from the instrumentation; it might come from the melody."

Everyone agreed the score should evoke seventeenth-century Kilkenny, but it shouldn't sound like a period piece or a pastiche of Monteverdi and Cavalli. "When you are working in a certain period you have to compose with the ears and eyes of today," says Coulais. "The story is more important than the period."

"Kilkenny doesn't have a particular style of music," O'Snodagh adds. "But they had cool medieval instruments in Kilkenny at the time—funky little things that were hard to play. We experimented with them, but the sound was almost too medieval. Those instruments would've distracted attention. You're trying to enhance the visuals; if you start detracting from them, it won't work."

The final score is a rich, layered work that includes the Bulgarian Symphony Orchestra and Kíla. In addition, Norwegian singer Aurora Aksnes has recorded an adaptation of her song "Runaway with the Wolves." Moore says, "The difference between the demo track you listen to as you animate and the final orchestration is the difference between a line test and a color composited scene. When you work with the demo every day, it's a shock to discover how much richer the music is when it's recorded with the real instruments."

"The theme Bruno wrote for Bill and Robyn as hunters has a bit of a Greensleeves feel to it. I'm not sure if it's a hundred percent historically accurate, but it feels right for the period," Moore adds. "He

brought a similar English Middle Ages kind of sound to the rest of the score. But when we were recording with the orchestra in Sofia, he would turn to me and say, 'This is the part where I want Dee-Ann-Strong!' from Kíla to reply to the strings with her fiddle, or 'This is where we need Colin to play the flute. So even when he's recording the orchestra, he knows where he has to add something.'"

O'Snodagh recalls: "The Grouse Lodge studio is just outside the small village of Rosemount. Not five miles from the studio stands the Hill of Jinsneach. In Irish mythology it was seen as a gateway to the mythical province of Ireland. *Midhe Vre* (Kíla) spent three days in the studio with Bruno. It felt as though we had entered a province where magic-music happens: bow and blow, pluck and strum, bear and swish, listen and play, dream and create, trust and be. It was in this enchanted province that we worked on the music for *Wolfwalkers*."

Coulais sighs: "We will have multiple levels of music: the Irish band, the voices of the choir, the orchestra, some instruments. I recorded myself playing in Paris: the double bass, and Aurora's song. The mixing will be very complicated, but life is like that."

O'Snodagh was surprised to discover he and his fellow band members made an appearance in *Wolfwalkers* that was visual, rather than musical. "There's a few scenes where Tomm has painted very unflattering pictures of us," he concludes with a laugh. "We're caricatured as buskers in Kilkenny. They were looking for something comical, and we certainly attained it."



IX. Putting It Together: The Back End

"When Merlyn, Robyn's falcon, is flying, we sometimes delay the colour on the wings for a couple of frames or do a couple of frames of extra colour outside the line to make it feel fluttery. We try to make it look nice and logical—not like an ugly mistake. It has to be a beautiful mistake."

HELGA BJARNA DÓTTIR
DIGITAL INK AND
PAINT SUPERVISOR

OPPOSITE Three versions of these scenes show the work of the ink and paint department. Top row: The original animation; middle row: ink and paint added; bottom row: the same images with paint and line colour applied. Note the elements that suggest Merlyn's fluttering wings—and clearly on Mabel's face.

The checking, ink and paint, and compositing departments make up what's often referred to as the "back end" of an animated production. Their work is technical, detailed, and demanding, but often receives little public attention. A former DreamWorks artist commented, "Back end isn't exactly a glamorous term—it sounds like we're working in one of those two-person horse suits from vaudeville."

His technical background made assistant director Mark Muirby the logical person to oversee much of this area. "There are certain areas I tend to review and take off Tomm's and Ross's hands, for example, ink and paint. I don't think they need to look at every single colour pop," Muirby says. "So I'll watch and refer two or three things to them. I'm scheduled to be in every review, and that sometimes means I make more reviews than Tomm or Ross. I could probably tell you how any shot in the movie was assembled, because I planned how we went about creating most of the shots."

In recent decades, computers have played an increasing role in this area of production. The artists agree computer technology has made it "easier to do hard things." Victor Paredes, an artist who uses Moho, a 2-D-rigging software, says, "We're a very small team: three people. But we're the studio's secret weapon. When they don't know how to do something in the normal way, they know we can do it."

"You can also use Moho to create a lot of different rigs and setups to do animation," he explains. "We're using it for crowd animation. I can animate crowds with a hundred or more very small characters by myself. And those characters make the town feel alive. Moho is much faster, and you get results very similar to the look of

hand-drawn animation. The movie also has a lot of magic happening in the forest vegetation. We create the main movements for the individual plants, then the effects team adds elements that make it look as good as the rest of the movie."

Paredes says that when something is too expensive or boring to animate by hand, it's sent to his team. To animate the chains that fetter Moll, artists would have to draw every link and move them in ways that suggested the prisoner pulling against the weight of the iron. If the director changed the scene, every link would have to be reanimated. Victor says, "We created a rig where you just move one link and the rest of the chain follows it. If there's a retake, I'll just move the path and all the pieces will follow it."

For decades, animators drew on paper, and crews traced their drawings onto the acetate cels, which were then painted with special acrylics. The finished cels were photographed against the backgrounds. The process was labor-intensive and grew increasingly expensive. In the late eighties, Disney developed the technology to scan the animators' drawings into computer systems and colour them. *The Secret of Kells* was drawn on paper, but the Cartoon Saloon artists have switched to electronic tablets, eliminating the need for paper.

Even with the transition to digital workflow, ink and paint work is still labor-intensive and painstaking. A dozen or more colours may have to be applied to a single character in every one of thousands of images. There are limits to what's practical to do, whether the artists are working with computers or physical art supplies. Digital ink and paint supervisor Helga Bjarnadóttir recalls, "At the start of the project, we tested one scene several times with different numbers of coloured lines. Lined everything, and showed them to

"I sometimes think, 'What if this feature cost \$30, \$40, \$100 million? Would we ever stop tinkering?' The fact that we don't have infinite money and infinite time stops us from doing that. Directors need to be decisive, but they need to consider the cost of changing their mind later. If you do that, the little adjustments start to be seen as little improvements, not meandering. The production could go on forever if you didn't have line producers and production managers looking at their watches and at the budget."

MARK MULLERY
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

the directors. We kind of met in the middle about how many lines of colour."

Bjarnadóttir explains that her team does more than simply fill in outlines: "We're not just colouring things. In the town, we have to mimic the woodblock-print style. Colouring the forest line is easy because you can hide a lot in the scribbles."

The digital ink and paint crew also adds details to some drawings, giving the result a richer look. "We do the dirt on the characters' feet. That was supposed to be clean up, but they had so many things they needed to work out, I thought maybe I could solve it with a technical solution—so we could take care of it in ink and paint," she says.

"I learned TVPaint really well," she continues. "I had some time, so I went online, read all the forums, and tried things out. We have programmers in-house you can ask to build small tools. But for some things, you have to make the program work for you. So it was just sitting down and beating my head against TVPaint until I could get something that worked."

The coloured animation, effects, and backgrounds then go to compositing, where they are combined to form the final images.

"At the start of the project, we talked a lot about how the compositors would use things delivered to them, how the files should be named, what they need," Bjarnadóttir says. "We have a very close relationship. If there's an issue with something I've delivered, they can tell me and I can readjust it. If I get a complicated scene, I may ask them how they want it done."

"Compositing creates the final image," explains department supervisor Serge Urmé. "It's a really interesting job because we receive all the images from the other departments—background, special effects, ink and paint, shadows—and put them together. If the director wants something to feel sadder, we can change the colour of the background, the characters, or the effects to enhance that feeling."

Compositing may also involve adjustments to the camera angles and movements, which must be carefully planned to preserve the stylized look of the film. Urmé says, "In compositing, we finalize the camera moves. The perspective is strange because everything is flat, and the camera needs to preserve that feeling. The goal is to stay somewhere between 2-D and 3-D. Keep the 2-D but with a 3-D movement."

"On the characters, we may also add texture and work on the line," he continues. "On the characters' faces, it's important to keep the focus on the acting, so we put on less texture. We keep the faces as simple as possible so we don't disturb the amazing work they do in animation."

The power of the technology can be daunting. The filmmakers must resist the temptation to continue altering an image and make a decision, or the film may never be finished.

"It's really important to have precise art direction," Urmé concludes. "All the compositing artists have a copy of the colour script. It's important to keep those ideas about colour and ambient lighting in mind. With the technology, we can change a colour. We can key a line with one colour rather than have ink and paint do it. We can manage whatever change the directors want. The only problem is time. If they want changes, it takes time. But we can do it."



ABOVE: The character of the film, created by Serge Urmé.

OPPOSITE PAGE: The character of the film, created by Serge Urmé. The body just as the spirit of the character of the film, created by Serge Urmé.



Afterword

Looking over the pages of this book, it's hard to believe the first sketches and ideas date back to 2013. I was still in the midst of making *Song of the Sea* when Ross and I dreamt up the idea over lunch.

As I drifted into middle age and grandparenthood over the course of this production, the central themes became only more urgent; hopefully we can remind our audiences of our tenuous connection to nature and the interconnectedness of our own inner worlds and well-being with the world we live in.

The ideas, characters, and storyworld percolated and discolled over many years while we worked together with Will on the screenplay, and with so many artists on the designs, the storyboards, the animation, the backgrounds, and all the artifacts of production.

Of course the art you see here is only a tiny fraction of the mountains of work produced by the team over the course of development, pre-production, and production. Animation is as much a subtractive process of editing and selecting as it is an iterative process of refining. So many directions are tried at each stage before the final product is delivered. And of course the final film is only one of many possible outcomes that can arise from the collaborative process.

What I am happiest to see though is that the vision Ross and I had at the beginning is still there, right up until the final image. So many times I've seen animation artbooks where I fear the daring concepts and visual ideas at the beginning of development became lost as the project wound through the exhaustive process of production. Thankfully that is not so with *Wolfwalkers*, and that is thanks in no small part to the crew of artists, production staff, and producers who believed in what Ross and I were trying to create.

For me animation and, in particular, hand-drawn animation is an art form that is unique in its ability to draw on the thousands of years of visual language handed down to us from the illustrators, painters, and cartoonists of the past. We don't only have to mimic live action, but convey the emotions and inner worlds of our characters, not just with how they move, speak, and act, but also with how they and their world are drawn and painted.

I hope you can see in this artbook and in the final film our attempt at exploring those possibilities, and hopefully it will inspire other artists and animators to go even further.

TOMM MOORE

Directing *Wolfwalkers* with my old friend Tomm has been a journey of ups and downs, highs and lows—from the early days of just dreaming up scenarios and outlandish possibilities with Will, the most patient and positive of screenwriters, to pulling our hair out over micro-edits before coming deadlines. Changing the gender of characters, killing and then resurrecting them, changing landscapes west to east and back again like indecisive gods, feeling like what you have at the end of day is worthy of production to starting again from scratch the next morning.

Were it not for Tomm and I being friends since we were eleven, we might have gone separate ways through production. Like an old married couple, we knew how to bury the hatchet and move on. Making *Wolfwalkers* tested us all to the nth degree, but anyone who works in animation has to learn patience at twenty-four frames per second—or else consider a career in something faster.

At times when we felt tired of the project, we had to find the core element of the story that kept us going. For me, hearing Mebh's lament at what the soldiers have done to Meb stirred me, often to tears; it reminded me of why *Wolfwalkers* needed to be finished.

The wolves have been extinct in Ireland for over two hundred years, and we no longer can be stirred by their haunting howls across our landscape. But maybe this story might stir that long-forgotten feeling of being wild, free, and alive, and encourage some of us to break free of whatever chains hold us in our routines. It may remind us to hold on to things that are disappearing. It might make some of us appreciate the wilder things in life, to leave them be and not try to tame and tidy every corner of the planet or our own lives. Maybe even to howl at the moon sometimes. And who knows—maybe one day wolves will howl across Irish hills once again.

A huge thanks and all credit to the beautifully talented artists and creatives of all kinds who have helped make *Wolfwalkers* along the way—the movie is a sum of all parts and all arts.

ROSS STEWART



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OPPOSITE A representation of Pádraig and Máire in a painting by the artist John Butler.

THIS PAGE A representation of Pádraig and Máire in a painting by the artist John Butler.

1. Máire and Pádraig in a painting by the artist John Butler.

2. Máire and Pádraig in a painting by the artist John Butler.

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22. Máire and Pádraig in a painting by the artist John Butler.





Acknowledgments



OPPOSITE: As they work on a film, the artists inevitably turn out good drawings, caricatures, and many more about the production.

ABOVE: Charles Solomon. Art by: Federico Pirovano.

Thanks of course to Ross, who I was lucky enough to grow up with and whose talents have been a constant source of jealousy and inspiration for me since we met in school Fadó Fadó.

I would also especially like to thank a young artist from Spain, María Pareja, who joined us early in the production and grew to be our right-hand woman—an amazing young talent who is as speedy as she is gifted. Only a tiny amount of her work appears in this book, but she was a guiding force behind so much of it.

And thanks also due to the awesome team at Abrams who brought the flotsam and jetsam of production together so beautifully and to Charles, who has become a friend and welcome visitor to our studio over the years—and who did such a great job of providing an engaging and entertaining overview of the process.

On a personal note, I would like to especially thank my wife, Liselott. When writing or designing a character, I often base them on someone in my life as a way to make them more authentic. It also is a trick to make living with the character day after day, for years on end, more tolerable! So Robyn is at least in part, and at least for me, very much a tribute to her huge empathy for animals and the natural world, as well as to her determined fierceness when it comes to protecting those she cares about. And finally, I would like to thank Mara, my granddaughter, who surprised and delighted us all by arriving into our lives while we were in production, and in whom I already see that fierce intelligence and love of nature that she shares with her grandmother.

TOMM MOORE

I first met Tomm Moore and Paul Young in 2009 at the Creative Talent Network in Burbank, California, when Tina Price asked me to conduct a question-and-answer session with the director of the first Irish animated feature. I watched *The Secret of Kells* accepted eagerly, and we've been friends ever since. I met Nora Twomey not long after when Ross Stewart.

My sincere thanks to all the artists involved in *Wolfwalkers* who took time from their work on the film for interviews, Sandra Andersen, Sean Bean, Heiga Bjarnadóttir, Svend Rohmann Bonde, Darragh Byrne, Andreu Campos, Richard Cody, Will Collins, Bruno

Coutinho, Eduardo Jaramasceno, Nicolas Jebray, Alice Dieudonné, Jeanne-Sylvette Giraud, Maria Doyle Kennedy, Jon Kenny, Honor Kneafsey, Simon McBurney, Oliver McGrath, Eimhin McNamara, Tatiana Muzzi, Mark Mulvey, Victor Paredes Muñoz, Colm O'Sneadagh, María Pareja, Federico Pirovano, Andrzej Radzka, Stefano Scapolaro, Nannasch Schandler, Ross Stewart, Tommy Tiernan, Camille Tinguy, Serge Urmé, John Walsh, Leo Weiss, Eva Whitaker, Beth Whitaker.

While I was in Kilkenny, Charly Mattsson arranged most of the interviews, playing a neat game of schedule Tetris. When I returned to LA, Desiree Meade set up interviews and Zoom conferences, answered my endless questions, and organized a treasure trove of original artwork with unflagging good cheer. Brian Tyrrell handled additional coordinating and scheduling. Additional thanks to Liselott Olofsson and Yvonne Ross for their hospitality and to Federico Pirovano for his hilarious caricature.

Eric Klepfer at Abrams proved to be one of the most sympathetic editors I've ever worked with. "I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship," Designer Liam Flanagan brought the book to vivid visual life, with a loving attention to detail.

My excellent agent Richard Curtis once again oversaw the contract. I remain grateful for my friends' enduring affection and forbearance when I whine about writing. Julian Bermudez, Kevin Caffrey, Pete Docter, Paul Felix, Eric & Susan Goldberg, Dennis Johnson, Jef Mallett, John Rabe, Stuart Sumida. On the home front, special thanks are due to Scott and Mattie; further editing was provided by Typo, who regards my keyboard as a cat bed.

CHARLES SOLOMON

An internationally respected critic and historian of animation, **CHARLES SOLOMON** has written for the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *Gizmodo*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Variety*, and *National Public Radio*. His books include *Tales of Olden Times: The Art and Making of Disney's Animation*, *Warrior Beauty and the Beast* (2017), *The Art of the Disney Golden Books* (2014), *The Art and Making of Peanuts Animation: Celebrating Fifty Years of Television Specials* (2012), *The Toy Story Film: An Animated Journey* (2012), *The Disney That Never Was* (1995), and *Enchanted Drawings: The History of Animation* (1989), which was a *New York Times* *Best Book of the Year* and the first book to be nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award. Solomon also writes the *History of Animation* column for *CLA and Chapman University*.



Crioch

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Production Manager: Kathleen Gaffney

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ABOVE: Torrey Moore offers a happy vision of the movie's ending. (Crioch comes from the Old Irish word for "end.")

FRONT ENDPAPERS: An intricate scene illustration conveys the bustle of daily life in seventeenth-century Kilkenny. Artists: Background by Clara Anetillo; characters by Indreka Perera.

FRONT ENDPAPERS OVERLEAF: Kilkenny castle, occupied by Cromwell's troops. Line by Anna Long; colour by Stefano Scapponi and Hortense Marano.

OPPOSITE ARTIST: Maria Dwyer

OVERLEAF: These watercolour sketches seem to invite the viewer into the depths of the Irish forest. Artists: Line by Laura Long and Eduardo Derrazcano; colour by André Oehm and Stefano Scapponi

CASE ARTISTS: Torrey Moore, Ross Simpson, and Maria Pareja



